2015 BOARD MEETING AAR/WR

SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY MARCH 20, 2015

Present: Philip ‘Boo’ Riley, Souad T. Ali, Sara Frykenberg, Kimberly Carfore, Emily Silverman, Dorothea Kahena Viale, Tim Helton, Dirk Von Der Horst, Shanshan Yang, Jonathan Lee, Sarah Robinson, Hester Oberman, Leigh Ann Hildebrand

Meeting convened at 1:35 PM.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Approval of minutes from November 2014 Board Meeting in San Diego. Item tabled until Boo Riley arrived. After his arrival, the minutes were unanimously approved pending small revisions.

1. Review of new approved policy for running for VP and EC. This item tabled until Boo Riley arrived. Upon his arrival, Dirk and Boo presented on the issue of AAR/WR officer elections and the wording “Candidates are not required to be present at the election…” This phrase allows for candidates for AAR/WR office who cannot attend the regional meeting, as well as those present at the regional meeting but absent from the business meeting proper for scheduling reason. The following amended wording as proposed:

*“Candidates are strongly encouraged to attend the general meeting at the annual conference, to demonstrate the seriousness of their commitment. However, they are not required to be present.”*

This amended wording was approved by a vote of 11 to 2, none abstaining.

1. Continuing the proposals concerning election wording, Dirk and Boo recommended the following change to the wording on page 3:

*Candidates for the remaining board positions (three advocates and caucus liaisons, three student representatives -- one of whom is elected to the national student committee – and four regional representatives) are required to be members of the AAR and reside or have standing in the Western Region. Student representatives must be studying or employed at an institution in the region. Regional representatives must be studying, employed, or resident in the region that they represent.*

This wording was unanimously approved with no abstentions and is to be amended in the appropriate location.

1. Visas. This was both old and new business. Board discussed the visa policy issue in detail – currently that AAR/WR does not help provide a visa other than providing the usual letter accepting a paper proposal, which could be used as documentary support in a visa application.

After discussion about visas, Board agreed by acclaim (no vote) to keep the existing visa policy in the AAR/WR policy file. This language will be added to the introductory material in the Call for Papers for the AAR/WR annual meeting. The language is:

*“From time to time internationals contact the AAR/WR and request a personal invitation to attend the conference, which they present as a necessary step in order to obtain a visa. In February 2013 the EC decided that we do not have the resources to support requests that involve visas, and so we adopted a formal policy that we do not get involved in visa issues. Note, our policy at the regional level differs from the national policy and so such inquirers are encouraged to investigate possibilities for attending the national conference and are referred to the AAR national website (*[*http://www.aarweb.org/*](http://www.aarweb.org/)*)”*

NEW BUSINESS:

1. The board expresses a preference that regional meeting be during spring break to ensure meeting is not impacted by pedagogical needs during class days.

1. Some board members expressed concern that the signage on campus for the 2015 meeting was inadequate in some ways. In the future, the conference manager will work with coordinator on campus to ensure there is adequate signage for the meeting.

1. Some board members also expressed concern about assigned rooms at the 2015 regional meeting being changed. Some flexibility with room schedules is requested. Some classes were meeting and having exams, and those professors were allowed by Santa Clara University to override conference room assignments.
2. The board discussed the possibility of adding a program unit/section in Hindu Religions. There was discussion about the name of the unit and its scope. It could be named “Hindu Studies” or “Indian Religions,” but the latter might overlap with “Religions of Asia,” an existing unit. The decision was to have an additional session focused on Hinduism, which would be different from other groups, particularly “Asian American Religion.”
3. The advocate-level positions spoke briefly, summarizing their work and pre-conference events. Individual issue brought up below.
4. Leigh Ann raised a question about the role of the advocate level positions: what are the responsibilities of these positions? No descriptions on website. Response is that they are currently unwritten and part of the role involves organizing pre-conference events.

1. AAR/WR currently hosts a paper competition in two categories: senior scholars and students. There is a separate Islamic Studies paper award, funded by Souad. After discussion, the board agreed to expand this to three categories:
   1. Students.
   2. Independent and non-tenure-track scholars.
   3. Tenured and tenure-track scholars. This level does not come with a monetary reward.
2. The board discussed the merits of adding a representative to the board for the Nevada area. The discussion required a review of the bylaws; the region may not be authorized to create new “sub-regions.” While the President felt that a Nevada rep could be added without changing the operating agreement, Boo and Dirk dissented. The latter directed the board to the policy file and operating agreement, which do not seem to allow for creation of a new regional representative position. After discussion, the resolution to pursue adding a new Nevada regional representative passed by unanimous vote. It was referred to the Executive Council to begin pursuing that process.

1. Sarah Robinson-Bertoni, Graduate Student Caucus (?) representative discussed the grad student professional development events at the AAR/WR 2015 meeting. There are three panels and a workshop being presented. Because these are not the same as section/unit sessions, people were allowed to be on multiple panels and workshops, more than the original limit the policy file. Co-chairs often function as moderators and respondents for multiple panels, in addition to being part of workshops and caucus events. Another board member expressed similar concern about “single person panels” – one person presenting on a topic in a session or workshop.

The board decided on this issue that the best solution is to encourage program unit directors to abide by the policy file concerning building successful sessions. This should be explicitly addressed in the program unit director’s meeting each Spring.

1. Leigh Ann Hildebrand, Queer Advocate, expressed concern about the responsibilities of the role. Boo Riley suggested that a caucus task force could be a good support for these matters. Boo himself will pursue convening the task force.

1. Sara brought forth a proposal supported by other caucus representatives that the board meetings be moved to Thursday night or another time, to allow for a full day of pre-conference events that did not conflict with administrative obligations at the regional annual meeting. There was extensive discussion about this, but no final decision was made.

Meeting was adjourned.