

AAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Tuesday, November 24, 2020, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm EST

Present: (Board Members) Whitney Bauman, José Cabezón, Kimberly Connor, Kerry Danner, Kathy Downey, Stacey Floyd-Thomas, Marla Frederick, Amir Hussain, Zayn Kassam, Aarti Patel, Mayra Rivera, Randall Styers, Alice Hunt
(AAR Staff Members) Elizabeth Hardcastle, Nicholé Jefferson, Robert Puckett, Dorrie Toney.

President Cabezón issued a Call to Order at 4:04 p.m. EST

Motion 1: Approve agenda. Passed unanimously

President's Report (Cabezón):

José Cabezón reviewed the accomplishments of the Board for the past year. These include:

1. The first year of full-time work of the Committee on Professional Conduct. He appointed the initial ombudsperson and now the two others have been elected.
2. A successful transition to an online format for the Annual Meeting. Staff performed heroic work for which President Cabezón expressed gratitude and praise. He also praised the tremendous work of ED Alice Hunt and her staff, particularly Robert Puckett, as they adjusted to and prepared for this reality.
3. Issued COVID grants to members who have lost income; this effort was supported by 100 percent Board participation. The AAR has given close to 30K in 66 grants and provided 160 annual meeting registration waivers. 45K remains to be distributed.
4. Created an Investment Committee mandated by the AAR Board several years but had not been realized. At-large members were appointed by José and have met to offer best practices for investing the AAR endowment.
5. Created the Presidential Futures Task Force to meet challenges of pandemic and other looming issues. Kathryn McClymond will serve as chair. The task force has met and is dividing into smaller affinity groups. September the committee will provide an interim report; one year later, the final report.
6. Filled appointments for working groups and committees.
7. Established a process for review of working groups and committees.
8. Instituted procedures for reviewing ED and conducted an ED review as required in the by-laws.
9. Issued 7 different statements on behalf of AAR on issues relevant to our membership. Also issued 7 letters in support of institutions where religion and other subjects in the humanities are at risk. Released a more general statement about the importance of the academic study of religion.

10. Created a board working group on Sustainability.
11. The Hiring, Evaluation, and Placement Task Force is putting their work on pause pending the work of the Futures Task Force.
12. President Cabezón concluded by thanking the Board and all the volunteers who stand on juries, committees, etc. who supported his presidency.

Executive Committee Standing Committee Review Process (Cabezón):

The Board discussed the plan prepared by the Executive Committee for an AAR Standing Committee Review process, a neglected task that is required in the by-laws. President Cabezón explained that, during a review year, a committee does a self-study rather than typical annual review. The Executive Committee also developed a schedule for the review process, modeled on Program Committee processes, but without external reviewers. The initial review of all standing committees will be conducted over three years and, after that, will move to an every 5-year process. Committees will be notified of the review process at the end of the year (2020). President-elect Marla Frederick suggested we inform committees upfront that the review process may result in realignment of committee work, resulting in fewer committees and less work for staff and to assure them that this effort was an effort to best assess how to deploy organizational resources and accomplish our mission and goals. Transparency of process is key. Staff is working on best practices for committee work, all are parts of a bigger process of organizational development, a wholistic effort to identify AAR needs and whether or not they are being met by current structures.

Annual Meeting update (Puckett):

Exciting and terrifying is how Chief Scholarly Engagement Officer Robert Puckett described his work, all done with less time than usual. He praised the tremendous effort of AAR and SBL staff and partners. He anticipates this experience will be an exciting as a way to prepare for future year-round initiatives as we become familiar with creative formats and venues. Annual Meeting registration was slightly below anticipated but the staff still expect more registrations before conference opens and as it is being conducted. A group of around 80 trained graduate student have been hired to provide technical assistance. During the course of the Annual Meeting, over 900 separate events will take place.

Executive Director's Report (Hunt)

Executive Director Alice Hunt reviewed events for board members. She encouraged full Board attendance, especially at business meeting. She also noted that this year the memorial recognition of members who passed away during the last year will be more personal.

Welcoming Incoming Board Members:

At 4:45 our new Board Members were welcomed:

Laurel Schneider—Secretary

Nicole Kirk—Contingent Faculty Director

Brian Pennington—Regions Director

Amir Hussain—Vice President (and current Board member)

Thanking Outgoing Board Members:

President Cabezón and board members thanked and praised outgoing board members:

Kimberly Connor—Secretary

Kerry Danner—Contingent Faculty Director

Kathy Downey—Regions Director

All board members joined in thanking outgoing President José Cabezón.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 p.m. EST.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Rae Connor,

Secretary