

2024 Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 22, 2024

Call to Order 2:06 PM

Attendees: Andrew Jacobs, Clayton N. Jefford, Lewis Ayres, Rick Brumback, Rebecca Falcasantos, Jennifer Knust, Thomas Clemmons, Michelle Freeman, Joel Kalvesmaki, Michael Cameron

- I. 2022 Minutes are unanimously approved.
- II. President's Report—Andrew Jacobs [report on file with Sec/Treas]
 - A. Topics of Tiered Membership and the Society Name will be discussed on Thursday.
 - B. There is a goal to have address two themes to put before the membership at the GBM.
 - C. There will be a committee to oversee the appointment of a new *JECS* editor since this is Stephen Shoemaker's final year.
 - D. This is the first year we have the Guidance Committee overseeing the various ad hoc committees. This will require contacting the current members of the committee to determine if they would like to continue to serve.
- III. Vice President's Report—Lewis Ayres [report on file with Sec/Treas]
 - A. The number of submissions was a bit down this year, likely due in part to having the Oxford conference this year.
 - B. LA proposes that there is value in allowing the president to select the plenary speakers rather than the vice president make the selections. The feeling is that the vice president can always consult with the president, but this is the privilege of the vice president.
 - C. The question is raised about the inclusive aspects of the conference and whether there can be some Zoom sessions, etc., alongside the formal conference. The difficulty is in identifying what elements best serve the accessibility component but doing so in an affordable way. Questions have been raised about expanding the virtual or hybrid components to allow more persons to participate. It is good to keep the goal of the conference in mind, i.e., the presentation to colleagues of scholarly research. This will likely be a topic that keeps coming up every year.
 - D. Is there an advantage to taking the management of the proposals out of the hands of TER and giving our vice president and team better access to the submissions. It may be possible to have a Google sheet or similar. This would also be a good point to provide directions on submission guidelines, something that number of members have asked about.
 - E. Returning to the matter of virtual participation, there is a question of security/access for those who attend the General Business Meeting. This has been a request for virtual access. Would it be sufficient to be able to attend but not vote? Perhaps the real issue would be the voting process in relation to virtual attendees. This brings up the question of whether the virtual aspect is designed for information or for participation.
- IV. Secretary/Treasurer Report—Rick Brumback [report on file with Sec/Treas]

- A. The membership numbers are down this year. This may be due in part to the Oxford conference value.
 - B. When talking with TER about possible venues, should we suggest new venues, including universities, for them to examine for 2028 and beyond? We might give them 8 or 9 options.
- V. Student Member-at-Large Report—Michelle Freeman [report on file with Sec/Treas]
- A. The room-share option continues to be utilized and effective.
 - B. There is still the Grad Student Mixer.
- VI. JECS Report—Stephen Shoemaker [report on file with Sec/Treas]
- A. Laura Nasrallah and Morwenna Ludlow are reappointed for the position of Associate Editor.
 - B. This will be SS's last year.
- VII. New Business
- A. Tiered-Membership Dues
 1. The two ad hoc committees have presented a proposal for a tiered membership. There is also a concern for how much JHUP would take per membership--\$35 still or an increased amount.
 2. There is also the question of how many tiers there are or should be. Other societies end with “over \$150,000” and a fee of \$175. The proposed tiers have now been adjusted with adjusted fees:

Tier 1:	Graduate Students	\$35
Tier 2:	Income \$59,999 and below	\$70
Tier 3:	Income \$60,000-79,999	\$80
Tier 4:	Income \$80,000-99,999	\$90
Tier 5:	Income \$100,000-124,999	\$100
Tier 6:	Income \$125,000 and above	\$150
 3. The board unanimously approves this increase.
 - B. Standards of Professional Conduct
 1. This is something that the board can approve, and it will be then announced to the society.
 2. We may have JHUP put a checkbox on membership renewal page to say the individual has read this statement and upholds these standards.
 3. The Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct is approved unanimously approved by the board.
 - C. Grievance Policy
 1. It is slightly amended to tighten the language.
 2. The policy is approved unanimously by the board.
 - D. Society Name Change
 1. AJ expresses gratitude to the committee examining the matter of society name. He proposes that the findings of the committee be presented to the society rather than the board simply approve a position and push it forward.
 2. The suggestion is made that the board contacts the society and proposes several name options, including the current one, and solicits responses leading to a decision. The committee suggests Zoom listening sessions where members can express their thoughts; this might also allow understanding of views and opinions. It may be that a straw poll is taken with an

acknowledgment of the board's preference for "The Society of Patristics and Early Christian Studies." This could be followed by a Zoom listening session on responses to this name, avoiding a yay/nay option and instead asking for reasonings/thoughts.

3. It is proposed that AJ and LA jointly send an email affirming that the board has expressed support for SPECS. It also solicits comments on this name giving members a chance to input. It is proposed to have the straw poll in the fall of 2024 with Zoom listening sessions in the winter. The hope is that a consensus can be had and a Board decision announced at the 2025 convention. Then the needed processes for name change will be completed.
 4. What about finding the new website domain name for this?
- E. RB raises the issue of not having the typical NAPS board meeting at Oxford since we have just had a board meeting in May, as well as not having the NAPS reception because of having had the conference in May. The board approves suspending these two elements for this year.

Thursday, May 23, 2024

Call to Order 9:02 AM

VIII. TER Report—John McHugh and Bonnie Coop

- A. AJ raises the question about higher expenses for virtual components for 2024 compared to 2022. JMcH explains that in general technology costs are higher. Once Covid hit, the interest among tech companies to provide platforms grew, and then costs have gone up as companies try to recoup the investment and turn profit. BC explains that we have also added services for making the plenary session available virtually (we did not do this in 2022) and we have enough for two sessions. This has increased the per person cost. We have less than 20 registrants for the virtual sessions. AJ has asked that RB be given a breakdown of these costs. BC notes that our virtual sessions have to be managed onsite by hotel/AV company staff; this is a big driver for the cost.
- B. TER presents a deep-dive into the actual expenses of the 2024 conference. The costs of food have risen significantly post-Covid, as has the cost of labor and services. Hosting the event in Chicago has added a significant cost (tax-plus-plus) that can actually increase costs by 45-50% depending on the item. Concerning the program for the event, the paper copies cost about \$10 per item, and the mobile app is about \$9 per person.
- C. Information was shared about examining the venue possibilities for future years 2028-2030. The board is open to looking at other venues in Chicago and also other cities generally in the Midwest. TER will be looking at some options in both categories within the Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan footprint and report back about possibilities. The key elements include accessibility and cost as well as venue costs, local attractions, etc. There is also a willingness to look at a slightly different time-frame such as in June. We could even consider which days of the

week give advantage. A Friday-Sunday might open up locations and improve costs.

- D. There was about \$1000 donated for assisting graduate students with registration and event costs, and it appears at this point that there is sufficient need to utilize all donated funds.
- IX. CLA Report—Joel Kalvesmaki [report on file with Sec/Treas]
- A. JK reports about the society's first Open Access publication, noting that as a rule the CLA volumes only sell about 300 copies on average with about 100 eBooks. The Luminos model is inexpensive to publish and increases accessibility with lower price points.
 - B. What if NAPS were able to offer \$1000-2000 to assist authors in the cost of publishing? However, the question is raised about adding an expense for the society when we are facing financial challenges related to conference expenses. An option might be having the individual apply for a Small Research Grant. This might involve retooling the awards and prizes category to open this option beyond what the SRG limits. CNJ notes that the society has always been concerned with supporting publishing and dissemination of knowledge, so assisting with OA would be consistent
 - C. JK is close to finalizing a deal with Alfonse Fürst and Aschendorf Verlag to reprint the Jon Dechow's *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity* What about something like Wipf & Stock to reprint any of the PMS titles?
 - D. There were 20 nominations of texts for the First Book Prize, a much higher number than in 2022, and JK reports they were of a uniformly high quality.
- X. Nominating Committee Report—Michael Cameron [report on file with Sec/Treas]
- A. MC notes the call for nominations went out in three phrases. The first call resulted in a number of nominations, but a second and third call went out. This delayed the final composition of a slate.
 - B. There were additional slots for the APC to fill gaps from 2023, and additional slots for the DHC when one DHC member agreed to become a Member-at-Large.
 - C. It is noted that the DHC is rather specific in its remit and may be better targeted in a call for nominations. Perhaps there could be a pool of possible candidates that might be a source of future nominations, or something similar.
 - D. AJ asks if we have a record of all members who have held board positions. RB says we do not already have this but will construct one.
 - E. LA asks if there is a reason that the VP nominees are not put before the society at the General Business Meeting for a vote to select the VP rather than having the Nominating Committee make a recommendation. The NC could still collect the nominations and ensure the candidates are sensible candidates, including involvement in the society. This would still include sensitivity to the two halves of the society regarding discipline (theology and social history) and other elements of diversity.
- XI. Digital Humanities Committee—There is no DHC report this year.
- XII. NAPS Guidance Committee—Ellen Muehlberger [report on file with Sec/Treas]
- A. EM notes that the structure is a bit difficult to execute based upon the small size of the society and at times formal channels were not necessarily followed. But this committee is still a work in process.

- B. The work done has been very good in communicating with the various ad hoc committees. However, CNJ asks whether the NGC was actually helpful to AJ qua president in taking some of the load off him. AJ replies that it has and it will continue to improve.
 - XIII. Awards and Prizes Committee—Clayton N. Jefford [report on file with Sec/Treas]
 - A. There were good submissions for each of the categories. There were fewer submissions for Small Research Grants and Regional Study Initiatives.
- Adjourn 11:10 AM

Agenda

NAPS General Business Meeting

May 24, 2024

Hyatt Regency (Chicago)

Call to Order by Andrew Jacobs at 6:45pm

There is a quorum.

- I. Moment of Silence:
Dennis E. Groh, Joseph G. Mueller, Robert Gregg, Gay Byron

- II. Officer Reports [Reports are on file with the Secretary/Treasurer]
 - A. Report of the President (A. Jacobs)
 - 1. The board has approved a professional conduct standard and a grievance policy. These will be posted on the website, and there will be further effort to put this into motion.
 - 2. There have been 3 ad hoc committees over the last two years: Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity & Access Committee; Committee on Professional Challenges; and a committee focusing on the society's name.
 - 3. There has also been a NAPS Guidance Committee that has overseen these ad hoc committees and reports to the board.
 - 4. The board has adopted a tiered-membership structure. This will be done still in conjunction with JHUP, including asking some basic demographic data.

5. The board has agreed to support a particular name that has emerged from the work of the survey, but the aim is to get information from members about thoughts on the name. The board has identified a name it would like to ask the membership to consider. There will be an online straw poll to gauge how people feel about the name, and this allows input. Following that, there will be Zoom listening sessions to understand how people feel, providing some qualitative data. If there is a clear direction, then the board can address the actual name change in May 2025 and hopefully have direction to bring this topic to a resolution.
6. It is clear that the society cannot continue as is with the meeting with fiscal sustainability. So TER is looking at potential other venues whether in Chicago or in some major cities in the Midwest. There are key criteria for candidates like travel accessibility, surrounding areas, and then academic or business venues. We are even looking at the possibility of changing dates. We are under contract with the Hyatt during 2025 and 2026. The aim is to look at finding a spot to sign contracts for 2028-2030.
7. This is the last term of Stephen Shoemaker as JECS editor, so there will be a search for the new editor who can be appointed at the 2025 meeting. A call will go out in the fall to identify a figure that can be put in place in May 2025.
8. The survey that goes out asking about feedback and improvements, so the members are asked to complete those surveys and give feedback.
9. Question from the floor: Are we required to have a certain number of events here at the Hyatt? Answer: No, we just have a Food & Beverage minimum. So we can adjust, and we have been looking at the feasibility of having both a Dessert Reception and Friday Banquet. TER has been asked to
10. Question from the floor: Can we mention the name the Board likes? Yes, it is the Society for Patristics and Early Christian Studies.
11. Question from the floor: Will Oxford be held in 2027? Answer: Yes.

B. Report of the Vice President (L. Ayres)

1. The planning of the conference went very well, and various figures helped.
2. We had slightly fewer proposals than usual, but that is not necessarily surprising given Oxford happening this year.
3. There were some initiatives that have begun in the past but for which we have very few proposals.
4. In trying to implement measures suggested by the committee on inclusivity, there were some adjustments. Name badges can be personalized. There is a lactation room. We continue to have the virtual presentation sessions, but we are also at the mercy of presentation proposals. AV is very expensive, and we will need to think about that going forward. The plenary sessions have only been done through audio because of cost. If there are AV projects the membership wants, they need to inform through the survey, knowing that there is a cost.

5. Julie Lillis has hosted a virtual social hour, though it is not being run through the conference itself.
6. At requests for more virtual sessions, we still have to concern ourselves with cost. Some items have been not pursued or done in limited fashion in part because of cost. Members are encouraged to respond to the member survey.
7. The conference app is new this year. We welcome feedback on usage and satisfaction with effectiveness. This is a way to move away from the paper programs, but we would need the mobile app to be effective.
8. Question from the floor: What about the costs of the app? It was helpful to hear that the paper program is \$10 each.

C. Report of the Secretary/Treasurer (R. Brumback)

1. There is a report on membership statistics and an encouragement to invite others to become members.
2. RB provides a breakdown of the finances, and the key is explanation of the expenses for hosting the conference, especially concerning AV and F&B.

III. Editor and Committee Reports [Reports are on file with the Secretary/Treasurer]

A. Report of the JECS Editor (S. Shoemaker)

1. The queue has shorted to about 1 year. Thank you those who have served as associates and on the JECS advisory board.
2. We continue to have good diversity in submissions and publications.
3. Thanks go to the editorial asst Michelle Freeman, book review editor Young Richard Kim, the various assistant editors.
4. Replacing Michelle Freeman in the fall will be Natalie Reynoso.
5. Thanks to the many scholars who have been the anonymous reviewers for articles.
6. Please think about the new editor needed and be willing to contact with any questions or suggestions.
7. There were 9 entries for the Best First Article Prize, and the winner is Camille Leon Angelo.

B. Report of the CLA Editor (J. Kalvesmaki)

1. Why publish with CLA? Recognition from NAPS and UC Press, excellent advertising. Target is about 90,000 words (notes included).
2. Thanks to Associate Editors Mary Farag, Aaron Johnson. Also, thanks to Eric Schmidt of UC Press, who has just moved to Basic Books.
3. Three books have appeared since 2022, including one text that is the first title in CLA that is available for Open Access.
4. There were 22 nominations, all of which were high caliber. The winner of the Best First Book Prize is Julie Kelto Lillis.

C. Report of the Nominating Committee (M. Cameron)

1. The NC encourages those nominees not appointed this year to continue to remain in contact in the coming years.

2. Thanks are given to Scott Moringiello and Erin Galgay Walsh for their work.
 3. There were multiples calls for nominations in order to fill the slate. Especially on the Digital Humanities Committee, if there are those who would have the skills and interest to serve, please let that be known.
 4. The slate is read. There are no nominations from the floor.
 5. Call for vote. Approved unanimously.
- D. Report of the Awards & Prizes Committee (C. Jefford, presented by R. Brumback)
1. Dissertation Completion Grant: Stacie Beach
 2. Dissertation Research Grant: Christopher S. Atkins
 3. Graduate Research Grant: Jonelle Weier
Adam Estes
Santa Ana
Jean-Paul Juge
Sarah Griffin
 4. Regional Study Initiatives: Don W. Springer
 5. Small Research Project Grants: Ian N. Mills
Matthew Burden
 6. Thanks are offered to all APC committee members for their work