

American Academy of Religion/Western Region

Constitution and Bylaws

(proposed at 2009 Annual Regional Meeting)

1.0 The American Academy of Religion/Western Region (AAR/WR).

1.1 The Western Region is an official region of the American Academy of Religion. The Region comprises three bodies: general membership, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee.

1.2 There are two categories of general membership: regular and student. Rights, duties, responsibilities and privileges of these two are the same, except that student members are allowed a discount on annual regional meeting registration and constitute a separate body, the Student Caucus, which is responsible for electing the Student Representative to the Executive Committee. Any individual may become a member of the AAR/WR by paying the dues required by the national American Academy of Religion. Any member may submit a proposal for a paper or a panel to be presented at the annual regional meeting, although not all proposals may be accepted for inclusion. Presenters must be members of the national AAR in order to present papers at the AAR/WR annual regional meeting.

1.3 The Board of Directors of the AAR/WR shall meet twice a year, once in conjunction with the regional annual regional meeting and once in conjunction with the AAR national annual meeting, for the purpose of conducting the normal business of the AAR/WR. Such Board meetings are open to all members of the AAR/WR. In addition, the Board of Directors shall act as a nominating committee reporting its slate of nominees to the business meeting of the annual regional meeting.

1.4 The Executive Committee is composed of five members: the President, Vice-President/Program Chair, Past-President, Regionally-Elected Director, and the Executive Secretary of WECSOR as *ex officio*.

2.0 The Board of Directors includes up to nineteen members: President, Vice-President/Program Chair, Past-President; Regionally-Elected Director; Executive Secretary of WECSOR; Minority Advocate; Queer Advocate; Student Representatives (one from Northern California, one from Southern California, one from Arizona); Liaison with the Women's Caucus/Western Region; Sub-regional Representatives (up to six).

2.1 Office of the President. The President shall have a term of office of one year, automatically following a one-year term as Vice-President/Program Chair. Duties and responsibilities shall include: to call and preside over meetings of the Executive Committee; to call and preside over meetings of the Board of Directors; to call and preside over the annual business meeting of the

region in connection with the annual regional meeting; to select the Plenary Speaker for the annual regional meeting; to deliver the Presidential Address at the annual regional meeting which concludes the term of office; to assist the Vice-President/Program Chair in planning and executing the annual regional meeting; to oversee the reading of the Student Competition Papers and the Independent Scholar Awards and to help select winners, making the awards at the annual regional meeting.

2.2 Office of the Vice President/Program Chair. The Vice President/Program Chair shall be elected by the general membership at the business meeting held in conjunction with the annual regional meeting and shall have a term of office of one year. Duties and responsibilities shall include: acting for the President in his/her absence; communicating with Section Chairs and any Special Sessions Coordinators, including calling a meeting of Section Chairs in conjunction with the annual regional meeting; planning and executing the program of the annual regional meeting in conjunction with the WECSOR Executive Secretary.

2.2.1 Planning the Annual Regional Meeting. The Vice-President/Program Chair shall: receive and review all panels organized by Section Chairs; invite special papers; solve scheduling problems that arise; give final approval of the program in cooperation with the WECSOR Executive Secretary.

2.3 Office of the Past-President. The Past-President shall have a term of office of one year automatically following a one-year term as President. Duties and responsibilities shall include: acting for the President in the absence of both the President and Vice-President/Program Chair; advising the Vice President regarding annual regional meeting programming; serving as liaison to the SBL/PCR Executive Committee; judging papers for the Independent Scholar Award.

2.4 Office of the Regionally-Elected Director. The Regionally-Elected Director shall have a term of office of three years, which may be renewed once for an additional three years. The term shall end in November at the annual meeting of the national AAR. The Regionally-Elected Director shall be elected by the general membership at the business meeting held in conjunction with the annual regional meeting of the AAR/WR. Duties and responsibilities shall include: to record and transmit the minutes of all meetings of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee and of the business meeting of the annual regional meeting of the AAR/WR; to represent the regional on the national Board of Directors of the AAR; to keep the editor of *Religious Studies News* and the regional newsletter informed of the activities of the Region, in addition to providing information about the annual regional meeting.

2.5 Office of the Executive Secretary of WECSOR [see section on WECSOR]

2.6 Office of Minority Advocate. The Minority Advocate shall have a term of office of three years, and shall be nominated by the Board of Directors and elected by the general membership at the annual regional meeting. Duties and responsibilities include: assuring that the concerns of racial and ethnic minorities are represented in the deliberations of the Board and in the activities of the AAR/WR.

2.7 Office of Queer Advocate. The Queer Advocate shall have a term of office of three years,

and shall be nominated by the Board of Directors and elected by the general membership at the annual regional meeting. Duties and responsibilities include: assuring that the concerns of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered, and other-gendered persons are represented in the deliberations of the Board and in the activities of the AAR/WR.

2.8 Student Representatives. There shall be three Student Representatives: one from Northern California; one from Southern California; and one from Arizona. Student Representatives shall have a term of office of three years, with the beginning of each term staggered to provide continuity of student leadership to the organization. They shall be elected by the general membership at the annual regional meeting. Duties and responsibilities include: representing student concerns to the Board of Directors; reporting to student AAR/WR members on Board actions; calling meetings and presiding over a student caucus at the annual regional meeting; maintaining liaison with student representatives in other regions and with the national AAR.

2.9 Office of Liaison with the AAR/WR Women's Caucus. The Liaison with the AAR/WR Women's Caucus shall have a term of office of three years, and shall be elected by the membership of the AAR/WR Women's Caucus. Duties and responsibilities shall include: representing AAR/WR Women's Caucus concerns to the Board of Directors; reporting on Board actions to the Women's Caucus.

2.10 Office of Sub-Regional Representative. Up to six Sub-Regional Representatives shall have a term of office of three years, and shall be nominated by the Executive Committee and elected by the general membership at the annual regional meeting. Duties and responsibilities include: representing sub-regional concerns in the deliberations of the Board; reporting on Board actions to the sub-regions; recruiting Section Chairs; recruiting senior scholars from the respective regions to participate in the AAR/WR annual regional meeting. The sub-regions comprise: Northern California; Southern California; Hawaii; and Arizona/Nevada.

3.0 Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is charged with the general oversight of the program of the Region. This includes determining the place, date, and theme, if any, of the annual regional meeting; assuming responsibility for membership recruitment; and proposing amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws, and to the Policies and Procedures of the AAR/WR periodically to reflect developments in the Region, its association with other bodies, and other duties as required. Such amendments are to be approved by the general membership at the Annual Business Meeting held in conjunction with the annual regional meeting.

4.0 WECSOR (Western Commission on the Study of Religion). WECSOR is incorporated as a nonprofit institution with 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt status in order to coordinate the annual regional meetings of the American Academy of Religion/Western Region; the Society of Biblical Literature/Pacific Coast Region; the Western Jewish Studies Association; the National Association of Professors of Hebrew/Western Region; American Society for Oriental Research; and other scholarly entities in order to provide maximum efficiency and lowest cost. The Vice President/Program Chair of AAR/WR shall work with the WECSOR Executive Secretary to plan and make arrangements for the annual regional meeting.

4.1 WECSOR Board of Directors. The WECSOR Board of Directors shall consist of the Executive Secretary of WECSOR; the AAR/WR Regional Secretary; the SBL Regional Secretary; the AAR/WR President; the AAR/WR Vice President; and the SBL/PCR President.

4.2 Office of the WECSOR Executive Secretary. The WECSOR Executive Secretary shall have a term of office of five years and shall be elected by the WECSOR Board of Directors. Duties and responsibilities shall include: overseeing all moneys and payment of all bills of the AAR/WR; maintaining all appropriate financial records, taxes, and legal documents of the Region; providing appropriate reports to the WECSOR Board of Directors and AAR/WR membership, including appropriate audit reports; maintaining the WECSOR website in a timely manner; arranging with the host institution of the annual regional meeting regarding logistical matters, including accommodations, registration procedures, room scheduling, parking, common meals, and so on; providing the call for papers of the annual regional meeting and registration information for the annual regional meeting to the editors of *Religious Studies News*, to the editors of the regional newsletter of the meeting, and to the general membership; and producing, printing, and distributing a joint AAR/SBL program for the annual regional meeting.

5.0 Annual Regional Meetings. The AAR/WR shall hold its annual regional meeting each Spring, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature/Pacific Coast Region. The meeting site alternates from year to year between Northern and Southern California, and Arizona, although other locations may be chosen by the board of Directors. The annual regional meeting is held at a college, university, seminary or hotel in a city that is easily accessible by air and which has adequate (low cost) nearby housing facilities. The AAR/WR shall seek to hold its regional meetings at venues that do not discriminate against gay, lesbian, bisexual, and other-gendered persons.

5.1 The Annual Regional Meeting shall serve as the venue for presentation of high quality, scholarly papers in the field of Religious Studies. It shall also serve as the locus for networking among Religious Studies scholars with diverse needs and interests. Finally, it shall provide the opportunity to make decisions regarding the organization and its direction and mission.

5.2 The Office of Section Chair. Section Chairs shall be elected to a three-year term, upon nomination by the Vice-President and election by the Executive Committee. Section Chairs shall have a terminal degree, be a doctoral candidate, or be otherwise recognized in the field; they shall have a scholarly or other appropriate track-record as evidenced by a C.V. provided to the Vice-President/Program Chair; finally, they shall have had demonstrated participation in the AAR/WR. Duties and responsibilities shall include: reviewing paper and panel proposals for the section they convene; checking that those proposing papers are members of the AAR; organizing separate paper proposals into thematically coherent panels; arranging for panel moderators and assisting with finding respondents, if appropriate; informing those who have submitted proposals whether or not their proposal has been accepted; submitting proposed panels to WECSOR Secretary and to the Vice President/Program Chair for inclusion in the annual regional meeting program; attending section panels during the annual regional meeting; attending the Section Chairs meeting at the annual regional meeting; providing additional information to the Board of Directors of AAR/WR as requested.

6.0 Removal from Office. Criteria for disqualification and removal from any office of the AAR/WR include failure to execute duties in a manner consistent with the highest professional practices and ethics. These best practices include, but are not limited to: transparency, honesty, inclusiveness, scholarship, and cooperation with officers and members of the AAR/WR. A demonstrated lack of good faith and integrity, a failure to promote the interests of the section and/or evidence of attempting to promote the interest of a particular individual or individuals may also lead to removal. Other reasons for removal may include sexual harassment, public intoxication, and failure to execute the duties of the office.

7.0 Liability.