2016 NAPS Board of Directors Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 21, Dusable Room, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Attendees: Susanna Elm (President), Kate Cooper (Vice President), Robin Jensen (Immediate Past President), Brian Matz (Secretary-Treasurer), Ellen Muehlberger (MatL), Stephen Cooper (MatL), Christine Shepardson (MatL), Young Kim (MatL), Travis Proctor (Student MatL), Stephen Shoemaker (JECS Editor), Jonathan Yates (Chair of the Nominating Committee).

Absent: Christopher Beeley (CLA Editor)

Call to Order at 2:06pm and Welcome

I. Approval of 2015 Board Meeting Minutes
A copy of the Minutes is on record in the office of the Secretary.
Minutes were reviewed. No changes proposed. Motion to approve the Minutes. Seconded. All approved.

II. Officer Reports
A. President Report (Susanna Elm)
1. Directives/considerations for ad-hoc committee to consider possibility of separate NAPS meetings during the Oxford Conference years.

S. Elm lists the members of this ad-hoc committee: Robin Jensen, David Eastman, Susanna Elm.

S. Elm reviews the issue: Oxford is an expensive conference. It is a revenue-generating opportunity for the university and the individual colleges. The university has high demand for the Examination Schools, so there is little incentive for the university to reduce the price of attending the patristics conference. The same is true for the colleges. Conference organizers themselves are thinking of alternative locations. They want our feedback on locations. They have done a lot to incorporate pan-European scholars. The conference is valuable for younger scholars, since it gives them access to scholars abroad they wouldn't get to meet at NAPS alone. We paid them $15k for last year's conference to bring down the cost. Yet, the cost of the conference was higher than before. Part of the problem is that even $15k is apparently a small percentage of their overall budget.

Board discussion on the topic ensues. Questions arise about budget impact on having/not having our own meeting. B. Matz explains our own conference usually breaks even in terms of the hotel and conference expenses; the real cost to NAPS of holding a separate meeting is the cost of the conference management fee paid to Total Event Resources, which is approximately $25k. Also, it is noted that NAPS membership dips during Oxford years, which impacts NAPS' financial position (membership dues, reduced JECS profit). Discussion then focuses on what to do with the $25k we would not spend on conference management fee if we did not hold a separate meeting in 2019.

Travel grants? Sense of the Board is that this is too little money to help too few. NAPS could also just continue to leave things as they are and not hold its own meeting and not give any money to Oxford or to members as travel grants. B. Matz notes NAPS traditionally adds that money to the investment accounts and so strengthens its financial position.

R. Jensen wonders if the IAPS has any views on this. S. Elm says Theo de Bruyn is concerned, too, about the Oxford conference costs. R. Jensen raises concern that the timing of the Oxford conference is too close to start of semester. NAPS should strongly consider holding its own meeting.

K. Cooper summarizes what she thinks are the three questions the ad-hoc committee should address: Q1: Do we want to continue to subvene Oxford? Q2: Do we want to hold our own meeting? Q3: If we hold our own meeting, do we do anything for ongoing support to Oxford?

S. Elm renews, on this Q3, consideration that we could create, just in those years, a special travel grant for which members can apply. Discussion continues. Sense of Board is that ad-hoc committee should seriously consider holding a separate meeting. R. Jensen summarizes discussion and indicates she would try to have a decision for Board by next year, and she expresses awareness we need to book hotel arrangements for NAPS if we are to meet separately in 2019.

J. Yates asks that, if NAPS decides to give funds to attend Oxford conferences, it should rather consider organizing a funding committee for travel awards to members to attend *any* conference.

2. Gender balance in the Society

S. Elm refers to some historical calculations by E. Muehlberger on gender balance. Y. Kim says our paper proposals for this year's conference were 25% from women. Discussion of board is that we might want to ask JHU Press to ask for demographic data from members upon new/renewed membership. Ratios of white/non-white individuals published in JECS from 2011-2015 is between 0-5% non-white.

S. Shoemaker says he will remind advisory board to solicit papers from non-white men. The advisory board's job is to solicit good articles from a diverse population. S. Elm says books for review is a place where we can more quickly address this imbalance. S. Shoemaker says he got pushback from advisory board on publishing an article in Spanish.

Y. Kim mentions Society for Classical Studies' programs for minority students, and encourages NAPS to consider some similar things. Other suggestions from Board revolve around sponsoring sessions at other Society meetings that focus on early Christian diversity. Other board members suggest the problem is systemic to academic culture, systemic to our research material, etc. T. Proctor suggests we reach out to institutions that more historically train minority students. Offer diversity scholarships. Offer travel grants to minority students to come to conference.

Y. Kim proposes we organize some committee that will help the Society think more deeply about these issues. R. Jensen says we should exploit some of the things we do already that could invite diversity, such as Islamic-Christian relations and Syriac Christianity. S. Elm asks if Y. Kim and T. Shepardson would form a committee to bring us some reflection next year on this topic.

New Secretary will be asked to work with JHU Press to add demographic data request to membership renewals.

3. Lifetime achievement awards for 2017
   a. Names of potential recipients of the award are discussed. S. Elm says she will follow-up later in the Summer on the final selection of who will receive next year's award.

   b. Discussion now turns to the title of award. The original award was named "Distinguished Service Award". Consensus of Board is that we should return to that name instead of continuing to use the name "Lifetime Achievement Award". This would mean that the award should be given on the basis of "service" to the Society rather than solely on scholarship. Also involves mentoring, serving JECS, etc.. Decision is made to change the name back to original name.

   Then discussion turns to possibility of an "in memoriam" award. Sense of the Board is that this should not be done, as there are too many deceased individuals over the past decades at this point who are deserving of the award.

   Then discussion turns to criteria for selection. Matter is tabled until Thursday meeting to await further work on this by Stephen Cooper.

   [Thursday meeting update]: Stephen Cooper submitted the following language: Distinguished Services to the Society awards are presented on the basis of distinguished service to NAPS. Distinguished service consists in sustained and otherwise extraordinary contributions to the various activities of our professional association: service on the board and its committees, as well as mentoring of junior scholars and promotion of scholarship on early Christianity.

   Board discusses some possible language adjustments. S. Elm agrees to provide some tweaks to the language and then to send that out to the Board at a later date.

B. Secretary-Treasurer Report (Brian Matz)
   1. Membership report [written report on file in the Secretary's office]

   2. Financial report [financial report on file in the Secretary's office]

   3. Proposal from "Northwest Early Christian Seminar" [this letter with accompanying proposal is on file in the Secretary's office. In brief, this group of NAPS members in the Pacific Northwest requests funding to support their annual, regional meeting].

      Discussion of the board is whether we do this for multiple types of groups like this around the country. Discussion also focuses on what might be criteria for applicants and what might be requirements for preferences. Decision is made to let NAPS' Awards and Prizes Committee to manage the grant – receive and vet applicants. Jonathan Yates will draft the criteria for the award. Name of the award: **NAPS Regional Initiative Grant**.

   4. Honoraria amounts – increase to $750? Add one for Friday banquet speaker?

C. Vice President's Report (Kate Cooper)

Written report submitted [on file in the office of the NAPS Secretary].

K. Cooper comments on the success of the "doctoral workshop" and is hoping to continue to do this in future years. One Board member asks if these are not suggesting to grad students they are unwelcome. B. Matz responds it should be quite to the contrary. He and R. Jensen recall the earlier Board discussions around the creation of these workshops. Furthermore, these are only for pre-ABD students; ABD grad students are able to submit papers for the regular, conference program.

Discussion turns to the pre-conference workshops. Sense of Board is that we don't want mini conferences, but that they should be skills workshops. Decision on pre-conference workshops: skills workshops on Thursday; topical workshops on Saturday.

Discussion turns to whether we should continue to cut papers or, since we have more meeting rooms at our disposal in future years at this hotel, we should accept most proposals. Sense of Board is to continue to reject about 10% (this year's percentage).

Kate also indicates she will be giving directives to chairs and to presenters about what to do and how to be successful in this role. Board offers suggestions to Kate Cooper for what to give as directions to the session chairs.

III. Report of the Student Member of the Board (Travis Proctor)

Written report submitted. Report was reviewed.

Board encouraged changes to mentor program that involve announcing topics of interest to potential mentees and then announcing the list.

T. Proctor reviews the student advisory board proposal [see his written report]. It is pointed out that this requires consideration of current, constitution and by-laws language of the Society.

IV. Discussion of suggestion to re-name the Society: "Early Christian Studies Association" (K. Cooper)

"North American" is a problem, because we have no members from countries south of U.S. and a small number of Canadians. Also our journal represents an international body of scholarship

"Patristics" is a problem because it's not what we are doing, properly speaking. It is not an accurate description of our members' interests, and it may limit the types of people who feel they cannot participate in the Society. Also, there is a gender issue with the term.

Is there a consensus name? What is the best way to go about this with our membership? Matter tabled at this point until Thursday's meeting.

5:15pm Meeting adjourned until following morning.

Thursday, May 22, Dusable Room, 9:00-11:00

VIII. CLA series Report (Christopher Beeley)

Due to flight problems, Christopher could not attend the meeting. His written report is reviewed. Questions asked about whether new monographs will continue numbering of earlier monographs. Christopher will be asked to clarify this issue at a later point. Sense of the Board is that it would be a good idea to ensure somewhere in the front matter of the book some reference is made to this being a continuation of the Patristics Monograph Series with some awareness of those volume numbers.

VI. Report from Total Event Resources (Colette/LuAnn)

Written report on file in the Secretary's office.
They review registration data and the number of exhibitor registrations.
Discuss budget for this year's meeting and the process by which the budget is determined.
Reviewed coffee consumption due to its high cost.
One question asked about sponsorships. LuAnn reviewed who are the two sponsors of our Friday and Saturday coffee breaks this year.
No further questions.

V. JECS Report (Stephen Shoemaker)

Reviews the written report [on file in the Secretary's office].

S. Shoemaker indicates he will discuss with the journal's advisory board the proposal to spin off the book reviews into an online-only version. One thing the advisory board will be considering is whether there will be a financial cost if we don't have as many database "hits" on our journal because the book reviews are moved to another venue. Discussion of the Board revolves around whether book reviews are important to the print version. Sense is yes, that many members enjoy reading those, and perhaps some read only those or at least read them first even before the articles in the journal.

Question from a Board member: can we add a fifth article to each issue? Stephen responds there is no backlog problem, and so no need at this point to add a fifth article.

Question from another Board member: can we expand word count on the reviews if we can get 10 more pages in the journal? This Board member's preference would be for longer reviews than for simply more reviews. S. Shoemaker responds the advisory board can consider this. Maybe moving from 750-word limit to a 1,000-word limit is a possibility. S. Shoemaker also mentions "review essays" are welcome, but JECS gets almost none.

Discussion returns to JECS book review editor's proposal to move book reviews online. Sense of Board is book reviews should remain in print. Also, the JECS editor should be sure to protect JECS' revenue (printed book reviews are a big part of that) as it is important to the financial health of NAPS.

VII. Committee Reports

A. Nominating Committee (Jonathan Yates)

Review of the written report [on file in the Secretary's office].

J. Yates summarized the process by which the committee did its work. Board member asks, "did the committee have enough information to make its decisions?" J. Yates indicates "no." They would like more information about individuals being nominated. To help with this, they insisted that nominations be accompanied with a 50-100 word description of the individual being nominated. The committee members also did google searches of nominees and, where appropriate, scanned some of their publications.

One Board member raises a request that further evaluation criteria be added to the NAPS website regarding how nominations are being evaluated. J. Yates indicates he would be supportive of this. Other Board members requested that we not add much, if any, criteria. This tends to limit people. Discussion continues. Board decides no criteria, even suggested criteria, for the nominating committee. These should be just internal guidelines for the nominating committee, including balancing diversity concerns.

Motion to approve the report and to appoint the two individuals to the Awards and Prizes Committee. Seconded. Approved.

B. Awards and Prizes Committee (R. Jensen)
Motion to approve the report. Seconded. All approved.

C. Digital Humanities Ad-Hoc Committee (Lillian Larsen and Joel Kalvesmaki)
Written report of the committee is on file in the Secretary's office.

L. Larsen reviews briefly the history of the committee's development and the discussions among the committee about what the new structure for the committee might be. Mentions that two members of the committee this past year stepped down due to other commitments. They added two new members also during the year: Alex Poulos and Sarah Bond.

Question from a Board member: can you say more about the NAPS approval of projects? J. Kalvesmaki responds this matter needs more time for the committee and Society to consider. Lillian also mentions that the DH committee could identify at least some "best practices" for projects even if it does not give approval to particular projects. Joel also mentions that committee members are volunteers and they can commit only about 3 hours/month, at most. So, "you get what you pay for" in terms of work from members. Lillian also indicates that NAPS can perhaps best help DH projects by providing a venue for individuals to network and to find out about others working on things similar to their own interests.

Tina Shepardson says we should be creating a web page within NAPS to promote the "best practices" list. This is deemed a good idea and will be implemented once the DH committee has this list prepared.

Last request of DH committee: organizers of the workshops request to be given reduced or free registration as compensation for the time spent preparing for it. Sense of Board is that, since this is not done for anyone else, including the VP who organizes the entire conference, this may not be done.

Board discussion then revolves around board composition/connection to the committee. Motion made to have Young Kim or Tina Shepardson (senior MatL members) meet with the DH committee and to compose a proposal and bring it to the Board in the future.

IX. Board revisits question of society's potential name change
Board discussion revolves around process by which the name change could be explored within both the Board and the Society. Board members asked to give their own view. Each member shares his/her view of the name change idea and/or of the process by which such a change might be done.

Kate Cooper asks for input on what to say in the general business meeting. She would like to advertise this possible change to an alignment with JECS' name. S. Elm outlines what she hears are the current options for how to move forward: (1) organize an ad-hoc committee, (2) a survey of membership, (3) do we say anything at this year's business meeting.

T. Proctor recommends an ad-hoc committee speak with APA, now SCS, about their experience of changing a long-standing, society name.

Motion made to organize an ad-hoc committee to "explore the effectiveness of NAPS' current name." Seconded.

Discussion is now about whether there is one chair or if this is to be co-chaired.

Chair will be Kate Cooper. VP will be invited to join it. Other members will be the Student Member of the Board, Jonathan Yates, 1 appointee each of the VP and the President.

IX. New Business?

A. B. Matz asks that the Board approve an increase in honoraria to plenary lecturers at the annual meeting from the current $650 to $750. This would be the first increase in at least six years. Motion to approve this increase is made. Seconded. All approved.

B. B. Matz further asks that the Board clarify what honorarium, if any, should be offered to the Friday banquet speaker. Since this is not supposed to be an academic presentation, sense of Board is that no honorarium should be offered. Still, B. Matz reports at least one past speaker during his term as Secretary-Treasurer has felt that an honorarium was due to them. Board agrees then to offer the banquet speaker a free banquet ticket. Motion to approve this offer is made. Seconded. All approved.

11:25am Meeting adjourned

NAPS General Business Meeting
May 27, 2016
Hyatt Regency (Chicago)

Meeting Minutes

Called to Order at 5:30pm

I. Appointment of Chair *pro tem*: Brian Matz

II. Moment of silence
Society members observed a moment of silence for the following NAPS members who died since the last annual meeting of the Society (May 2014): Mary Clark, RSCJ; Bill Harmless, S. J.; Rowan Greer; Maureen Tilley.

II. Officer Reports

A. Report of the President (S. Elm, delivered by B. Matz)

1. Announces the creation of an ad hoc committee to explore the usefulness of the name of the Society.
2. Also announced that two of the Members at Large were tasked with monitoring gender and diversity balance in the Society's activities. They will work with the incoming Secretary-Treasurer to collect this data in the coming year and more.
3. Announced the creation of an ad hoc committee to prepare a report on whether and how NAPS ought to continue to support the Oxford conference.
4. Announced the decision of the Board to create a regional scholarship grant category and that it will be for the promotion of gatherings of scholars in regions of the country, particularly in those regions that are least-served by patristics-related scholarship.

Floor is opened for questions. Two individuals had questions about the prospect of changing the Society's name. Those individuals' concerns were directed to the chair of the ad hoc committee, Kate Cooper. One individual had a question about the regional scholarship initiative, whether it would be for regional conferences or for working groups or for what, exactly. Chair responded that the Society welcomed all types of applications for this first round. Then, it will be up to the APC to determine what types of applications it thinks make the most sense. It is likely the APC will recommend the Board narrow the criteria in the future once it becomes more clear the extent of the demand for these types of grants.

B. Report of the Secretary-Treasurer (B. Matz)

1. Reviews the financial health of the Society. Meeting attendees were given a copy of the Society's annual budget report for their review. The Society anticipates a loss of approximately $5k for the current fiscal year; however, this is due to the Society not receiving the full amount due from JHU Press for the JECS profit. It is expected this will be rectified in the next fiscal year. It is stressed that JECS profit is what

underwrites much of the Society's activities and it is what ensures we can hold the costs of the annual meeting to a low amount.

2. Reviews the membership statistics of the Society. NAPS membership dipped a bit during the Oxford year, but the Society has rebounded well in the current year. In part, this was due to a more-vigorous-than-usual roundup by the Secretary of individuals whose dues had lapsed but who had sought to participate in this year's annual meeting.

Floor was opened for questions. One member asked about the possibility of re-evaluating NAPS' investment accounts. B. Matz responded with agreement that, with the handoff of financial responsibilities to a new treasurer, that new treasurer would benefit from the work of an ad-hoc committee intended to evaluate NAPS' investments and fund selections. It was agreed that, if the new Treasurer so agreed, this Society member would join the incoming and the outgoing treasurer on such an ad-hoc committee. Other interested society members were asked to present themselves after the business meeting.

C. Report of the Vice President (K. Cooper)

Reports on the process by which papers were received and vetted for this year's conference. Expresses thanks to the two board members who assisted with the program development: Christine Shepardson and Young Kim. Also reports on the number of papers accepted and upon the overall size of the conference. Also reports on the success of the pre-ABD grad student paper workshops.

III. Editor and Committee Reports

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

1. Editor reports on the number of submissions and number of accepted articles to the journal. Editor reports the editorial board will be meeting later and will discuss issues of author diversity and whether or not to keep the book reviews in the printed version of the journal.
2. Editor announces the recipient of the 2016 Best First Article Prize.

B. Report of the CLA editor (C. Beeley)

1. Editor reports on the results of contract negotiations with U of California Press and on the new monographs being published with the Press. Also identifies the individuals serving the monograph series as associate editors.
2. Editor also announces the recipient of the 2016 Best First Book Prize: Young Kim.

No questions from the floor.

C. Report of the Nominating Committee (J. Yates)

1. Report: J. Yates introduces and thanks the two other members who served with him on the Nominating Committee (Vasiliki Limberis and Daniel Caner). J. Yates also reviews the work of the committee since the previous, annual meeting.
2. J. Yates presents the candidates for the several offices for which the Nominating Committee was charged to fill.
    a. Vice President: D. Jeffrey Bingham
    b. Secretary and Treasurer (1 position): Rick Brumback, or formally, Richard A. Brumback III

c. Members-at-Large, Board (2 positions): Christine Luckritz Marquis (Union Seminary in Virginia) and Mark DelCogliano (University of St. Thomas)

d. Student Member-at-Large, Board (1 position): Erin Galgay Walsh (Duke University)

Chair thanks the Nominating Committee for their work. Chair opens the floor to additional nominations for each position. No nominations are made from the floor. Motion is made to close nominations. Seconded. Call to question. The vote is unanimous in favor of electing the above-named individuals to the respective offices.

D. Awards and Prizes Committee (R. Jensen)

The APC chair reports to the Society on its work during the past two academic years, including the new structure in place for identifying committee members. The Chair also congratulates the recipients of the awards and prizes for 2016, including:

1. Dissertation Final Year Grant: Mary Farag
2. Small Research Grant: Gerald Boersma
3. Graduate Student Paper Prize: Carson Bay, Mark Ellison, Julie Kelto Lillis, Abby Kulisz, Jessica Wright

IV. New Business?

No new business raised.

Motion is made to adjourn. Seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:27pm.