

2025 Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Call to Order 2:04 PM

Attendees: Andrew Jacobs, David Brakke, Lewis Ayres, Rick Brumback, Stephen Shoemaker, Jennifer Knust, Jonathan Zecher, Lucas Christensen, Joel Kalvesmaki, Ellen Scully

- I. 2024 Minutes are unanimously approved.
- II. President's Report—Lewis Ayres [report on file with Sec/Treas]
 - A. Discussion of the results of the Name Change listening sessions.
 - a. Feedback on the input from society members in the listening sessions. It is noted that there were 195 responses to the informal survey, and most understood and accepted the proposed change.
 - b. D. Brakke makes a motion that we change the name of the society to Society of Patristics and Early Christian Studies. AJ seconds. Board votes and unanimously approves.
 - c. AJ reminds that (1) we need to follow up with Kentucky and other government agencies on the name changes, and (2) we have to make changes on website and with JHUP.
 - B. The Oxford Conference will happen in 2027. It is noted that the conference made a profit in 2024 of more than 150,000 pounds and discussion is ongoing about what to do with that excess. We note that because NAPS has provided subventions to Oxford in the past. We want to make sure about any future funds from NAPS to Oxford.
- III. Vice President's Report—David Brakke [report on file with Sec/Treas]
 - A. The number of submissions for presentations this year was good but still below pre-Covid numbers.
 - B. Google Forms were used last year and went well. DB can share the forms and make it easy. Trident is good with this structure and complimented it. The only thing is that the Board needs to let them know before August that we will be doing this so that Trident does not purchase software or other expenditures.
 - C. AJ points out that we want society members to vote at the GBM, but if we have Guest Passes we just want to make certain that these guests do not vote on society business.
 - a. Perhaps have a way to distinguish members from conference attendees.
 - b. It is pointed out that there is a bit of hotel policing for those who don't have their name badges.
 - D. DB says there is no way to certify that the ones presenting are indeed registered members. Perhaps have a need for people to supply their NAPS membership #s when they register for the conference.
 - E. DB notes that on the proposal acceptance letter it says that one must be a member of the Society and must register for the conference. The aim is to have people not present when they are not members.
- IV. Secretary/Treasurer's Report—Rick Brumback [report on file with Sec/Treas]

- A. The handout of membership stats is shared. There has been an increase in membership dues to the Society based upon the tiered-rate system. AJ suggests that we reach out to prior years encouraging people to renew memberships.
- B. The financial elements are reviewed with the Board. This includes notice about the streams of revenue for the Society and then also the categories of expenses. This includes the cost of the conference and the revenues from sponsorships, registration funds, reception tickets. This will be discussed with Jill McHugh on Thursday morning.
- V. Student Member-at-Large Report—Lucas Christensen [report on file with Sec/Treas]
 - A. Room-sharing efforts continue and seem to be very effective.
 - B. There is advertising of the Pappas Patristic Institute funding for graduate students.
- VI. JECS Report—Stephen Shoemaker [report on file with Sec/Treas]
 - A. Had a bit of a dip in submissions post-Covid but are up now. There has been good diversity in authorship.
 - B. The queue has been down to about a year or so, which is the target time frame.
 - C. Ellen Muehlberger will be assuming the role of JECS Editor.
 - D. For the Associate Editors and Review Editor roles, they need to be addressed. The two associate editors, Andrew Crislip and Brian Dunkle, have agreed to serve a second term.
 - E. With Ellen M. moving to Editor, she put forward Jennifer Barry as the one to replace her and finish Ellen’s term.
 - F. It will be decided on Thursday morning when meeting with Ellen when to vote the new figures in for JECS.
- VII. CLA Report—Joel Kalvesmaki [report on file with Sec/Treas]
 - A. JK notes that Eric Schmidt, our longtime contact with UC Press, has stepped down and Margo Irvin is our new contact. She is here at the conference.
- VIII. APC Report—Andrew Jacobs [report on file with Sec/Treas]
 - A. There were a good number of submissions in the various categories, and the quality overall was very high.
 - B. Thanks to all the committee members who participated.
- IX. NAPS Guidance Committee—David Wilhite [report on file with Sec/Treas]
 - A. LA notes he had spoken with D. Wilhite about the NGC’s recommendation that this committee not continue as there is no standing need nor current ad hoc committees to work with. The board discusses continuing this committee and is overall in support of this. The motion is made and seconded that this committee be dissolved until needed. There were 9 who approved this motion and there were 2 abstentions.

Thursday, May 22, 2025
 Call to Order 9:02 AM

- X. Trident Experiential—Jillene McHugh
 - A. JM explains her role in putting together our Statements of Work and contracts each year. She also works on the budgets for us. She supplies to all Board

members a budget of our 2025 meeting and walks us through the major components.

1. Our Food and Beverage went down ~\$9,500 because of dropping the banquet.
2. AV costs are difficult to limit, but for 2025 it is about \$34,000, whereas 2018 was \$28,000.
3. There is the cost of lanyards, signage, etc.
4. The Mobile App was added but can take that off for 2026 and handle the conference programs more cost efficiently.
5. Can pass along the credit card fees to the purchasers.
6. There are 3 onsite figures to help with conference execution.
7. The number of hours that Trident has been spending on our conference has gone down. In 2022 it was ~450 hours and expected to be ~320 for 2026 at current levels.
8. The pricing per conference registrant is about \$600 and the registration and ticket income for the reception are significantly lower. The Society subsidizes the rest.

B. JM speaks about possible areas to cut costs.

1. Consider removing the Mobile App.
2. Consider handling the abstracts ourselves like DB did for 2024-2025.
3. Food and Beverage likely will not change and we have a minimum to meet.
4. AV is still expensive.
5. Do we need 13 breakout rooms?
6. Costs to NAPS may go down at some sites, but it might be that the cost to the individual will rise.
7. Moving to a new venue might help but would need to have some specifics about our needs/desires in order to build an RFP.
8. She estimates it would be difficult to cut the cost of the conference in half but maybe a significant reduction.
9. If we hold it elsewhere, Trident will have an increased cost because they're local to Chicago.
10. The amount we gain from book exhibits and sponsorship costs don't cover the amount of time Trident spends working to coordinate their presence. Or their attendance costs at \$600 pp.

C. The question is brought up about how to continue with needing to double income and cut costs by half.

1. The question is raised can we afford to maintain our contract with Trident through 2030. JM points out that much of what they do is tied to being an "accredited" company with an IATA number that allows them to work with hotels on our behalf. And there are financial benefits tied to that, like a hotel commission that comes back to NAPS based on rooms rented. That comes because of Trident's involvement.
2. JM asks about the virtual component and the possibility of raising it to a regular registration fee if keeping it at all

D. The question comes about a timetable for our next steps.

1. JM says it would be helpful if we could have 2028-2030 contracts with a “hotel” space by December 31, 2025. Increases the likelihood of obtaining best pricing.
2. Trident will send out RFPs to the best fits based on our preferences.
3. It is decided that we want to have a survey going out to membership about the key factors for the conference such as location, transportation, amenities, costs, etc.

XI. Nominations Committee—Scott Moringiello [report on file with Sec/Treas]

XII. DHC—there is no report

- A. The question is raised whether the DHC needs to continue. This question is to be put to the current members of the DHC to assess this and report back to board.
- B. The new DHC nominees will be dropped from the slate of nominees.

XIII. New Business

- A. The question arises about filling out the list of associate editors of JECS. DB relates that during his time the aim was to have a diversity of subdisciplines among the associate editors.
- B. DB suggests asking EM about. DB proposes that we accept the nominations for associate editors. Seconded, then approved unanimously.
- C. Planning the next conferences
 1. LA suggests that we have a carefully crafted post-conference survey querying about aspects of the conference.
 - a. Prioritize the elements of the program that are most important, e.g.:
 - i. High rate of paper acceptance
 - ii. Continental breakfast and coffee breaks
 - iii. Books exhibits
 - iv. Plenary lectures
 - v. Virtual sessions
 - vi. A/V capability
 - vii. Mobile App
 - b. How much is your attendance dependent on all these being present
 - c. Ask about conference location
 - i. If the meeting were held other than the Hyatt, where would you suggest it be held?
 - a. Elsewhere in Chicago?
 - b. Other cities?
 - ii. What priority factors for choosing a location?
 - a. Airline hub
 - b. Local amenities
 - c. Accommodation costs
 - iii. What date range do you prefer for the conference?
 - a. Same date—Memorial Day weekend
 - b. Middle of May
 - c. First two weeks of June

d. Last two weeks of June

- d. Would attendees be willing to pay more toward registration? Maybe tiered but also possible to pay extra?
2. The survey is developed by DB with Board input.
3. Discussion revolves around items to adjust/cut for the 2026 meeting. This includes cutting the Mobile App, having registrants pay for the conference program if they want one printed for them, shifting credit card fees to the registrant.
4. The idea arises of following the Oxford model or a modified Oxford Model where we provide the place and can recommend accommodations, but people cover their own costs outside of registration for the conference and Society expense for the venue.
5. Discussion turns to considering doing the conference without using a management company. DB points out that using Trident could be done at a lower number of hours and give the Board an idea of whether we need them in 2029 and beyond.
6. ES suggests that we want to review what items to eliminate or adjust for the 2026 conference and let Trident know by August so these adjustments can be made. RB shares a list of items that could be cut or removed without affecting the conference experience, including Mobile App, abstract management, paper program, credit card fees. This could represent a reduction of potentially \$15K+.
7. The topic of the virtual component comes up. This year there were 39 virtual registrants—27 regular attendees and 12 students, for a total of just under \$2,000 in registration fees. The cost for the virtual component was in the \$4,000-5,000 range. It is acknowledged that the accessibility matter is important and we don't want to eliminate access for those who cannot attend. DB will conduct a survey of the virtual attendees about their participation and options for future conferences including cost issues or a separate virtual event. There is also the matter of how virtual attendees might participate in the General Business Meeting. It might be that some virtual attendees would be willing to help execute
8. With regard to addressing the cost-cutting measures, the Board decides to inform Trident that the Society will no longer cover the credit card fees for registrants. The paper program will be an optional purchase at registration. The Mobile App is to be discontinued. The abstract management will be done by the VP and not Trident. The Board will ask Trident to send fewer emails, thus dropping the number of hours worked. Is it possible for the Society to do all the virtual component without using Trident? Yes, except for the streaming of the plenaries.
9. What of the plenaries? Does NAPS continue to use figures from outside the Society and outside North America? Having these figures has been enriching, but costs add up there.

Agenda
NAPS General Business Meeting

May 23, 2025

Hyatt Regency (Chicago)

Call to Order by Lewis Ayres at 6:43pm

There is a quorum.

- I. Moment of Silence:
Gregory Hillis, Dana Callaris, Fannie Layden
- II. Officer Reports [Reports are on file with the Secretary/Treasurer]
 - A. President's Report (Lewis Ayres)
 1. There is the need to appoint a new JECS Editor, and the Board has appointed Ellen Muehlberger to be the successor to Stephen Shoemaker.
 2. There has been much discussion of the name of the Society. Andrew Jacobs last year ran an informal survey of membership on the issue of the name, and this was followed up by listening sessions over the winter. While there is a desire by the Board to move forward with the change to the Society for Patristics and Early Christian Studies, there is a slight hitch. According to the bylaws, the proposed name has to be circulated to membership at least 30 days in advance of a vote on the change, which has not been done. So the actual vote and decision will be delayed until our next meeting.
 3. The next Oxford Conference will be 2-6 August 2027.
 - B. Vice President's Report (David Brakke)
 1. This year there were 360 registrants for the meeting, an increase over last year but still below the pre-pandemic levels
 2. Several changes were made to the program this year, several aimed at saving money, including the elimination of the Friday night banquet and the limiting of rooms with AV capabilities.
 3. There were about 40 virtual-only registrants, a good number.
 4. Thanks go to Ellen Scully and Jonathan Zecher for their help in vetting paper and panel proposals, and to Shawn Wilhite for advice and assistance throughout the year. Also, thanks go to Ohio State graduate students Ashley Jordan and Charlotte McDonald for serving as hosts of the online sessions, to Julie Kelto-Lillis for serving as the host of the informal online sessions, and to Bonnie Coop, Carrie Farley, and the other staff of Trident Experiential for everything they do. Thanks also to the members of NAPSS who proposed and organized open call thematic sessions and prearranged panels.

C. Secretary-Treasurer Report (Rick Brumback)

1. The membership numbers for the Society remain strong though they are lower than in 2021 and 2022. We continue to encourage membership among students and colleagues.
2. A tiered membership rate was instituted for 2025. The rates for retirees and students remained the same, and the tiers go up based upon an individual's self-reported income. Currently, this has resulted in a little over \$19,500 dollars, nearly double the income amount at this time last year. This has proven to be a benefit, and we are not aware of any problems as a result.
3. Concerning the finances of the Society, RB notes that there are three streams of income, conference considerations aside. These are (1) membership dues, (2) income from CLA and JECS publications, and (3) investment account income. The income from the publications, primarily JECS, is about \$43,000 to \$53,000 per year, so very healthy.
4. There are three major categories of expenses, conference aside. These are (1) operations, (2) publications, and (3) awards and prizes. Operations includes things like website costs, bank account fees, any attorney fees to deal with legal matters like changing our bylaws back in 2022, etc. The publications costs are covered by the JECS income, as is the cost of the awards and prizes typically. RB notes that setting aside conference expenses and issues, the Society runs in the black each year for all these other matters.
5. The difficulty is the rising cost of the conference. Continuing the conversation from 2024, the goal is to find a location to hold the conference that will fall within out budget. To this end Trident management company is working with NAPS to find a venue for 2028, 2029, and 2030 conferences. The Board is considering venues of various types including universities and colleges such as Loyola.
6. DB mentions that there will be two surveys coming to membership shortly: one from Trident asking about the quality of the conference, and one from the Board asking for input about possible convention sites and the components deemed most important to our membership.
7. Questions come from the floor about where the difficulty in finances lies. RB indicates it is due to drawing down on the mutual funds each year to pay for the conference expenses. However, he notes that because we sign contracts in advance, we begin to pay deposits early, so some of 2026 has already been paid.
8. RB reminds that the Society has only met in person twice between 2018 and 2024 due to Covid and Oxford Conferences, so it has been difficult to account for rising numbers in conference expenses.
9. It is mentioned that perhaps it might be possible to put on the conference for \$100,000, and if so, that would be about what is brought in for the conference, so operating in the black. The 2025 conference cost about \$215,000.
10. The average cost of the conference per attendee is \$600, but registration maxes out at about \$200, meaning the Society is subsidizing the balance for each attendee.
11. Question from the floor: Has there been discussion of other venues? Answer, yes, cities in the Midwest and it could be a convention center or a college or other. The Board and Trident are looking at all the above.

12. LA notes the goal of the post-conference survey from the Board is to identify the factors most important to membership concerning travel, venue, amenities, conference elements, that can be incorporated into the search for a new venue.
13. RB states that we work with Trident to identify locations, they negotiate with the hotels on costs for Food and Beverage, AV costs, etc. Their expenses are incorporated into the conference expense numbers. They cost about \$60,000 for the 2025 conference, charging about \$200 per hour and working about 300 hours on the conference. We may be able to reduce the amount they work.
14. There is also a discussion of changing the date to earlier in May or later into June. This will be asked after in the survey.

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

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

1. In the last year, 2024-25, we received 79 submissions, which is consistent with our average over the past several years, including during the pandemic. Our acceptance rate for the last complete year, 2023-24, was 29%, a little higher than the average of the preceding three years, which was 23%.
2. The queue has shorted to about 1 year.
3. We continue to have good diversity in submissions and publications.
4. Thank the many people who make the journal such a success. These include especially our editorial assistant Natalie Reynosa, the book review editor Young Kim, associate editors Marlena Ludlow, Carrie Schroeder, Lauren Asralla, Brian Dunkel, Ellen Muehlberger, and Andrew Crislip, and all the members of the advisory board. I'm most grateful, as always, of course, to the many scholars across the world, many of them in this room, who have served as anonymous reviewers.
5. SS expresses thanks for having been allowed to serve as Editor.

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

1. This coming November, there are scheduled two new books arrive: Danny On, *Fear of God: The Practice of Emotion and Late Antique Monasticism*, Aand Christopher Benura, *A Prophecy of Empire: The Apocalypse of Pseudomythonias from Late Antique Mesopotamia to the Global Medieval Imagination*.
2. Eric Schmidt, our longtime contact for UC Press, is now the head of Basic Books, and he has replaced by Margo Ervin.
3. As a reminder, with UC Press we are allowed up to two contracts per year. We are not a large series, but there are benefits to having a small series in that you get hands-on work from the editor and associate editors. Thanks go to Erin Johnson and Mary Farag.
4. A book that is in the series, John de Shouse, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity*, has been commissioned by Ashendorf Verlag, where we have come into an agreement with them to reprint this. Dr. Alphonse Fürst is spearheading this, and they're scheduling to have this available in autumn 2025. NAPS members will get a 30% discount on orders of that book.

C. Nominating Committee (Scott Moringiello)

1. Thanks go to Erin Galgay Walsh and John Penniman for their work on this committee.
2. The slate is read:
 - a. President: Mark DelCogliano
 - b. Secretary/Treasurer: Paul Kolbet
 - c. Members-at-Large: Graydon McCashen
Andrew Summerson
 - d. Award & Prizes: Michelle Freeman
Jeff Wickes
 - e. Digital Humanities: Chris Luckritz Marquis
Lydia Bremer McCollum
 - f. Student Member: Julia Nations-Quiroz
3. Vote is taken and approved unanimously.
- D. Report of the Awards & Prizes Committee (C. Jefford, presented by R. Brumback)
 1. Dissertation Completion Grant: Evan Andersson
 2. Dissertation Research Grant: Elizabeth Anderson
 3. Small Research Grant: John Solheid
 4. Regional Study Initiatives: Jennifer Barry
David Kiger
Don Springer
Davit Wilhite
 5. Small Research Project Grants: John Solheid
 6. Graduate Student Paper Prizes: Lucas Christensen
Adam Estes
Irene Gobbi
D. Hayden Hagerman
Jean-Paul Juge
- E. Thanks are offered to all APC committee members for their work

Meeting Adjourned 7:35 PM.