

The AAR Regions Task Force, which was charged with the responsibility of evaluating the structure, purposes, and functions of the AAR's ten regions, concluded its work in March 2011 and submitted its final report and recommendations to the AAR Board of Directors. The Board unanimously approved the Regions Task Force recommendations and accepted the Operating Agreement for Regions at its April meeting in San Francisco, California.

The Task Force, Chaired by Brian K. Pennington of Maryville College, was appointed by former AAR President Ann Taves to address a handful of specific challenges: 1) The heightened federal scrutiny of nonprofit organizations as a result of the Sarbanes–Oxley Act of 2002; 2) The tremendous variability in regional structures and in regional relationships to other learned societies, such as the SBL; and 3) The absence of a uniform understanding of the relationship of the regions to the AAR as a whole. Highlights of the recommendations include incorporating all ten regions as LLCs in the State of Georgia; adding a student representative to all regional boards; allowing members to choose the region to which they will belong; and providing additional support from the AAR office in Atlanta. Pennington predicted that the Board's adoption of these recommendations will strengthen both the regions and the AAR itself. He stated, "The Board's action makes the clear statement that the regions are the AAR and that the work of the AAR is accomplished in and through the programming and other efforts of its regional groups."

Recommendations

Bylaws and Operating Agreement

1. The AAR Board of Directors will approve a template of an Operating Agreement that reconstitutes the AAR's ten regions as Limited Liability Corporations.
2. Following new bylaw ratification, REDs will be reorganized into an AAR standing committee and the Regions Director will be named to that committee as Chair and ex-officio member [already complete: In the bylaws ratified at the 2010 Annual Meeting, a Regions Committee was constituted that consists of all Regional Coordinators (formerly REDs) and will be chaired by the Regions Director].
3. Include Regional Coordinators (formerly REDs) in the AAR Leadership Summit [accomplished: in the bylaws ratified at the 2010 Annual Meeting].
4. Revise all regional bylaws to ensure student representation in regional governance [substantially accomplished: the Operating Agreement that reorganizes regions as LLCs contains this provision].
5. Revise article 8 section 2 of the AAR bylaws to delete the phrase "who reside within the geographical area" to allow AAR members to elect their regional affiliation. At the point of becoming a member or renewing their membership, individuals should be informed of their region by virtue of residence and be given the option of electing membership in an alternate region.
6. Incorporate all regions in the state of Georgia [substantially accomplished: the Operating

Agreement that reorganizes regions as LLCs contains this provision].

7. After much discussion, this Task Force recommends that current regional boundaries remain in place. The MAR/NEMAAR boundary as well as the existence of two separate regions in that geographic area of North America should be revisited in two years to assess whether the efforts currently underway to revive NEMAAR have been successful.

Support and Development of Regional Coordinators

1. Move towards holding the Leadership Summit at a time other than the Annual Meeting to encourage committee members, including Regional Coordinators, to think of their work for the AAR as ongoing throughout the year.

2. Provide the Regional Coordinator a travel stipend to be used for regional or annual meeting to attract qualified and able candidates. Continue to include Regional Coordinators in VIP registration and housing for the Annual Meeting.

3. Ensure that the Regional Coordinators meet together at least once a year at the Leadership Summit and more frequently when feasible or necessary.

4. When the AAR conducts its anticipated survey of the membership, consult with Regional Coordinators so that some survey questions collect information about members' perceptions of and participation in the regions.

5. Revise and republish Regional Coordinators manual to take account of revised AAR bylaws and Board action on this Task Force report.

Annual Regional Meetings

1. Increase awareness of and attendance at regional meetings by publicizing them at the Annual Meeting through such means as staffing a prominently placed booth that highlights speakers, themes, meeting dates, and locations, etc.

2. Ensure that one staff member of AAR attends a meeting of every region, including the business meetings, at least once every three years in order to communicate the state and initiatives of the AAR to the regions as well as to remain informed about what is happening in the regions.

3. In the planning of every regional meeting, the AAR will facilitate conversation among regional officers, site representatives, and exhibitors to ensure that liability coverage extends to all participants at the meeting.

4. Regions should explore the potential for alternative programming that will enhance the meeting and better reflect the needs of the membership (online seminars, plenary speakers, book discussion, workshops, technology discussions, etc.).

Finances and Records

1. Require full disclosure of all financial activity of every region and of any consortium or commission to which a region may belong or which it may sponsor. The national AAR office will provide a template and guidelines for the annual financial report, due by July 31st, to include a closing bank statement and receipts.

2. Develop policies that maintain a culture of financial prudence in each of the regions.

While it is outside the charge and expertise of this task force to devise such policies, we urge the AAR to direct its staff to work with Regional Coordinators to devise uniform policies about budgeting, expenditures, reasonable cash reserves, and so forth.

Support for the Regions by the National AAR Office

1. Institutionalize means by which the work of the AAR such as that of Standing Committees and Task Forces is accomplished in and through the regions. Standing Committees should be charged with the task of exploring how to accomplish their objectives or implement their initiatives at the regional level.

2. In publications and communications, emphasize the role of regions as important component parts of the AAR and foster greater appreciation for the contributions of the regions.

3. When papers are rejected for the AAR Annual Meeting program, the rejection notification will encourage the author to submit the proposal to his or her regional meeting.

4. The board will designate \$100,000 in the investment account, the earnings from which will augment regularly budgeted funds available for Regional Development Grants.

5. In consultation with the Staff Liaison to the Graduate Student Committee, the AAR will consider the financial implications that serving on the Graduate Student Committee and as Regional Student Director will have on those who serve in those capacities and will develop appropriate policies and procedures to address those implications.

To view the full final report submitted to the Board of Directors, [click here](#) .

To view a sample Operating Agreement, [click here](#) .