

THE NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION

BYLAWS

Initially Proposed and Considered: November 23, 1997

Adopted: November 21, 1998

As Amended by the Membership: November 7, 2009

Article I - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The membership of the Association shall consist of those persons who are members at the time of the adoption of these Bylaws and of those persons who shall subsequently join the Association in the manner hereinafter provided.

Section 2. Membership is obtained by written application to the Executive Secretary and payment of the current year's dues. Membership is sustained by annual payment of dues, by payment of lifetime dues, or by payment of multi-year dues.

Section 3. Duties and responsibilities attaching to membership include:

- a) annual payment of dues as determined by the voting membership (see below, Article III);
- b) commitment to provocative, energetic and frontier presentations.

Section 4. *Termination*

A member who has failed to pay dues annually or for life or for a multi-year term will be dropped from the Association.

Article II - OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Section 1. *Selection of Officers and Members of the Executive Council*

(a) The President, Vice President, and members of the Executive Council are elected by the general membership at the Annual Meeting; the Executive Secretary/Treasurer is appointed by the Executive Council (AA XI, d) at any time.

(b) At least two months prior to an election, the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee of at least three members which shall consider and recommend the names of at least one candidate for each office to be elected. The Executive Council will approve the recommendations of the Nominating Committee or substitute its own candidate(s). The nominees approved by the Executive Council will be announced to the members at least seven (7) days in advance of the Annual Meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. Election shall be by ballot and the person receiving the majority of the votes cast for each office shall be declared elected. If no candidate receives a majority, the preliminary vote totals shall be read aloud to the membership, and the candidates with the two highest vote totals (which may be more than two candidates, in the event of a tie) shall stand in a run-off election. Successive run-off elections shall be held until one candidate receives a majority of the votes cast.

Section 2. *Terms of Office*

(a) The terms of office of President and Vice President shall be three (3) years. The Executive Secretary/Treasurer will serve for not more than two consecutive five (5) year terms (AA XI, d; g).

(b) The six elected members of the Executive Council shall be known as Councilors. The Councilors are elected to serve three (3) year terms in a staggered fashion, with two elected each year. They shall serve until their successors have been elected or appointed.

(c) In the case of death or resignation or permanent inability to act of any officer or Councilor, the vacancy shall be filled by the Executive Council for the unexpired term.

Section 3. *Powers and Duties*

(a) The officers shall perform such duties as are normally incident to the offices and implied by their titles including the following:

President. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Association ; presiding at all meetings of the members and of the Executive Council; seeing that all orders and resolutions of the membership and of the Executive Council are carried into effect;

executing all contracts and other documents on behalf of the Association.

Vice President. The Vice President's chief responsibility is to appoint and chair the annual Program Committee (Article III). In the absence or temporary disability of the President, the Vice President also shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of the President.

Executive Secretary/Treasurer. The Executive Secretary/Treasurer shall keep full and complete minutes of all meetings of the members, Executive Council and Standing Committees as well as complete records of all action taken by these bodies. The Executive Secretary/Treasurer shall keep and file all documents belonging to the Association that are committed to the Association's custody, and shall, as required by the President, the Executive Council, or by any of the Standing Committees, submit to the membership by mail, such matters as require the approval of or action by the membership.

The Executive Secretary/Treasurer, under the direction and supervision of the Executive Council, shall be the custodian of all cash and securities of the Association and shall keep full and accurate account of the receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the Association. The Treasurer shall collect all dues and shall deposit all monies in the name and to the credit of the Association with such depositories as may be designated by the Executive Council, and shall disburse the funds of the Association as directed by the Executive Council, making a proper voucher for such disbursements and shall render to the Executive Council and to the membership periodically or upon request, an account of all transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the Association.

(b) The Executive Council includes six (6) members elected at large; in addition, Council membership also includes the editor of MTSR and the Association's three (3) officers (President, Vice-President and Executive Secretary/Treasurer), all of whom serve as *ex officio* voting members of the Council. The Council shall initiate and submit to the members for their approval proposed policies of the Association and it shall have and exercise the power to take such actions as in its judgment is necessary and proper to carry out the purposes of the Association. For purposes of any action taken by the Executive Council, five members of said Council including at least two officers shall constitute a quorum and the act of a majority of the members of the Council present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Council.

(c) **Advisory Committee.** From time to time, the Executive Council may appoint scholars of religion or other persons to an Advisory Committee. These persons need not be Association members in order to be named to the Advisory Committee. The Association's three (3) founding corporate officers (the original President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer) shall sit on the Advisory Committee. Advisory Committee members may attend all council meetings and advise the Executive Council. Members of the Advisory Committee are appointed until they resign or are removed by the Executive Council.

Article III - PROGRAM

Section 1. The Association shall conform to scholarly conventions of openness and publicity. To this end:

(a) The Program Committee will be chaired by the Vice President, and will consist of at least three (3) members appointed by the Vice President for a one-year term. Members of the Program Committee must be members of the Association, but need not be members of the Executive Council.

(b) All meetings, programs, and other opportunities for scholarly communication sponsored by the Association, including programs held under the auspices of other scholarly societies, shall be advertised to all Association members at least six months prior to their occurrence; and in any case well in advance of the determination of program contents.

(c) Members shall be invited to submit abstracts for papers as well as proposals for entire sessions.

(d) Proposals for papers and sessions shall also be solicited from other religious studies scholars and from the humanities and social sciences community at large through email lists, advertisements sponsored by other scholarly societies, and other appropriate means.

(e) The Program Committee shall set deadlines, style, and other guidelines for the submission of proposals.

(f) If more proposals are received than there is available space to accommodate, proposals shall be evaluated by the Program Committee or an appointed subcommittee of the Program Committee through a blind review process (a process in which author's identity is unknown to evaluators) on the basis of merit and contribution to the Society's goals (AA II, a).

(g) A non-member whose paper is accepted for presentation shall be asked to become a member and to contribute one year's membership dues as a condition of participation in NAASR programs.

(h) Scholarly themes or foci for the following year's programs may be discussed and decided by the membership at the Annual Meeting. The Program Committee shall be directed by any such decisions.

Section 2. Working Groups

For the purpose of furthering longer-term discussions on topics in religious studies that may be of specialized interest, Working Groups may be created by approval of the Executive Council.

- (a) Working Groups will ordinarily have a specific objective such as the completion of an edited volume or special journal issue, or the organization of a conference.
- (b) The Executive Council shall establish application procedures for the formation of Working Groups.
- (c) An application to form a Working Group shall be approved for an initial term that may be renewed, subject to periodic report and review, and consistent with progress toward the stated objective of the Group.
- (d) A Working Group shall have the privilege of petitioning the Executive Council for funds to support its scholarly work. Ordinarily that support shall be limited to facilitating meetings of the Working Group in conjunction with other meetings of the Association.
- (e) In exchange for receiving such support, the meetings of Working Groups shall be open to attendance by all members of the Association. The existence of Working Groups shall be publicized to all members of the Association and to the field of religious studies at large.
- (f) A Working Group shall have one or more Chairs who submit the application to form a Working Group and assume responsibility for administering the Group and reporting on its activities to the Executive Council.
- (g) Any member of the Association may become a member of a Working Group with the approval of the Group's Chair(s).
- (h) A scholar who wishes to join a Working Group and who is not already a member of the Association shall be asked to become a member and to contribute one year's membership dues as a condition of participation.

Article IV - MTSR

Section 1. The official journal of the Association is *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* (MTSR). Like the Association, MTSR is committed to the presentation of provocative, energetic, and frontier scholarship (AA II, a). To this end:

Section 2. Editor

- (a) The Executive Council shall appoint an editor for MTSR.
- (b) The term for the editor shall be five years, renewable for one additional five year term.
- (c) If the editor, for any reason, vacates the position prior to the end of a five year term, the Executive Council shall appoint a new editor for a new five year term.
- (d) The editor shall be ultimately responsible for all details of publishing MTSR in a timely fashion. To this end the editor may appoint an editorial team (including a Book Review editor) to assist in the publication of MTSR during the editor's term of office.
- (e) The editor shall represent MTSR as a voting *ex officio* member of the Executive Council.
- (f) The editor shall report on the state of MTSR to the membership at the annual meeting.
- (g) The Executive Council may, at any time, dismiss the editor. The editor may be removed only by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Council. Grounds for dismissal may only be contravention of the organization's stated goals (AA II, a) or administrative/professional malfeasance.

Section 3. Editorial Advisory Board

- (a) The editor shall appoint or remove members of the editorial advisory board, in consultation with the Executive Council.

Section 4. Editorial Freedom

- (a) Though the editor is a member of the Executive Council and reports to the general membership at the Annual Meeting, the editor of MTSR shall enjoy complete editorial freedom as well as full freedom in the day-to-day administration of the journal's business and publication.

Article V – Key Thinkers series

Section 1. The Association sponsors a book series, *Key Thinkers in the Study of Religion*, which is published by Equinox Publishing. To this end:

Section 2. Editor

- (a) The Executive Council shall appoint an editor for the *Key Thinkers* series.
- (b) The term for the editor shall be five years, renewable for additional five year terms.
- (c) If the editor, for any reason, vacates the position prior to the end of a five year term, the Executive Council shall appoint a new editor for a new five year term.
- (d) The editor shall be ultimately responsible for all details of publishing the *Key Thinkers* series in coordination with Equinox Publishing.
- (e) The editor shall represent the *Key Thinkers* series as a voting *ex officio* member of the Executive Council.
- (f) The editor shall report on the state of the *Key Thinkers* series to the membership at the annual meeting.
- (g) The Executive Council may, at any time, dismiss the editor. The editor may be removed only by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Council. Grounds for dismissal may only be contravention of the organization's stated goals (AA II, a) or administrative/professional malfeasance.

Section 3. Editorial Freedom

- (a) Though the editor is a member of the Executive Council and reports to the general membership at the Annual Meeting, the editor of the *Key Thinkers* series shall enjoy complete editorial freedom as well as full freedom in the day-to-day administration of the series' business and publication.

Article VI - DUES

The annual dues shall be determined from time to time by the majority vote of the members, and shall be payable at the beginning of each calendar year. Special assessments may be made only when approved by majority vote of the membership and when levied shall be payable as dues.

Article VII – GENERAL

Section 1. For purposes of any action to be taken at an annual or special meeting of the membership, the members of the Association present shall constitute a quorum (AA XIII, c).

Section 2. All checks and notes of the Association shall be signed by such officer or officers as the Executive Council may from time to time designate.

Section 3. The Bylaws may be amended or repealed at any meeting of the membership provided that notice and the text of the proposed amendment shall have been submitted to the members at least thirty (30) days prior to said meeting. The amendment or repeal of the Bylaws shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present and voting at a meeting at which a quorum is present.