

# Executive Board Minutes

June 22, 2012  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

**Board Members Present:** Gary L. Anderson (Member-at-Large), Alfredo J. Artiles (Member-at-Large), Arnetha F. Ball (Past President), Carl A. Grant (Division B), Mary Elizabeth (Beth) Graue (Member-at-Large), Margaret Terry Orr (Division A), Barbara L. Schneider (President-Elect), William G. Tierney (President)

**Board Members Absent:**  
Laura W. Perna (Division J)

**Staff Present:**  
Felice J. Levine, Phoebe H. Stevenson

President William Tierney called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

## I. Introductory Remarks by President Tierney

President William Tierney welcomed members of the Executive Board to Tucson. He indicated that Executive Board meetings will be structured differently this year. Instead of discussing items on the Council meeting agenda, the Executive Board will focus on salient issues for which recommendations for Council are required. In addition, the Executive Board will focus on topics relating to current and future opportunities and challenges faced by the Association and education research.

Tierney indicated that he hopes to use his presidential year to concentrate on a few concise strategic goals. With the upcoming departure of Deputy Executive Director Phoebe Stevenson, it is also a good time for Executive Director Felice Levine to review and rethink the structure of the AERA Central Office. He expressed the hope that the Executive Board and Council meetings will be productive and both governance bodies can conclude the meetings in Tucson knowing that a few key items have been accomplished.

## 2. Report of the Executive Director

Executive Director Levine emphasized the importance of the Executive Board meeting since it is a good opportunity for members of the Executive Board to discuss important issues in a safe-haven environment in advance of the Council meeting. She indicated that she and President Tierney have reshaped the Executive Board meeting agenda to be more stimulating and catalytic and to encourage open discussion.

*Appointment of Interim Deputy Executive Director.* Levine reported on the appointment of Arnita Jones, Executive Director Emeritus of the American Historical Association, to be interim Deputy Executive Director. The appointment was made in anticipation of the departure of Stevenson at the end of June after 10 years of employment. The interim period will provide a time for the AERA Central Office to move forward with the benefit of Jones's work in key areas of operation.

*Bond Financing and Refinancing the Mortgage.* Levine reported on the Central Office's effort to explore options to refinance the mortgage for the AERA Central Office condominium site at 1430 K Street, NW, in Washington, D.C. The goal is to seek more favorable interest rates and terms for the debt service. She indicated that AERA will also use the opportunity to review AERA revenue projections so that the debt servicing can be structured in appropriate ways to support AERA's programmatic aspirations.

**Motion:** To authorize the Executive Board to vote via e-mail to authorize the Executive Director to execute the bond refinance. Approved unanimously.

Levine briefed the Executive Board on the status of the sale of AERA's properties on 17th Street, NW, in Washington, D.C. The lingering economic downturn since 2008 has significantly hampered the real estate market in Washington. Despite the sale of the 1230 17th Street building in 2011, the 1228 building remains unsold. AERA's real estate advisor, Richard Rome of Studley, Inc., recommended that AERA remove the building from the sale market

and invest approximately \$75,000 in improvements so that the building will be more marketable when the real estate market rebounds. The Executive Board was supportive of the plan.

## 3. Executive Session

The Executive Board met in executive session.

## 4. Review of Executive Board Minutes

The Executive Board discussed a plan to review and approve minutes from previous meetings by e-mail.

**Motion:** To approve the October 2011 and February 2012 Executive Board minutes by e-mail. Approved unanimously.

## 5. New Initiative: Education Research Service Projects

Levine provided an overview of the AERA new initiative—Education Research Service Projects (ERSP). She indicated that the three presidents will each pick two members of Council to serve on the Council subcommittee to start a staggered rotation. The Council subcommittee will be charged with reviewing ERSP applications once a year at the time of the February Council meeting. The Executive Board discussed the importance of assessing the effectiveness of the initiative and the need to identify criteria for the evaluation. Executive Board member Alfredo Artiles will draft the review process and criteria for consideration by the Executive Board.

## 6. AERA Financial Climate and Resources

Levine provided a briefing on the history of developing AERA's investment policy, which was approved by the AERA Council in 2005. The investment policy set forth a short-term investment account to support programmatic initiatives and a long-term investment account to provide for longer-term growth and to generate interest income and appreciation to fund the short-term investment account. She indicated that AERA had operated conservatively and had not withdrawn funds from the

short-term programmatic account, given the global economic crisis, which has negatively affected the investment markets since 2008. She reported on the positive returns realized by both the short-term and long-term investment portfolios during 2012.

## **7. AERA—Its Mission, Strategic Focus, and Ambitions**

Levine led a discussion on AERA's mission, strategic focus, and ambitions. She noted that, from a membership standpoint, AERA has fared reasonably well during the past decade. While most associations similar to AERA have lost members or remained steady over the last decade, AERA membership grew by 16%. The Executive Board discussed the proportion of net income contributed by the major functions of AERA (such as membership, publications, and annual meeting) and whether the proportions make sense for an organization like AERA. Levine noted that this topic was under consideration as AERA planned ahead. For example, in light of the trend to open access publishing over time, AERA, like other scholarly associations, needs to consider funding models for publication and the income-generating ability of publications in the future.

Levine gave an overview of a number of programmatic priorities that might have possibilities for dues revenue. The Executive Board brainstormed on such alternatives generating revenues for the future. Possible opportunities include changing and expanding the structure and delivery of the annual meetings and professional development offerings and online courses; centennial celebration and development campaign; and reaching out to new audiences such as users of education research from school districts and the policy arena; dual membership rate structure to attract part-time and contingent faculty; different registration fees for international attendees from developing countries; online meeting registration with membership dues; packaging and marketing data sources (such as the online paper repository for work in progress supported by a peer review or screening process); using technology

to provide opportunities for education researchers to collaborate on research and share information; and reaching out to new external groups.

The Executive Board reflected on the possibility of calling a meeting of foundation presidents to discuss and contribute ideas for the next generation of education research and the role of AERA. The Board discussed whether there were development experts who could be helpful. The importance of strategic development planning and the adaptation of a flexible timeframe for development projections in light of the current economic environment were also discussed. The Executive Board also reflected on how foundations are looking to support new directions and are more attracted to investing in the dissemination of new research and supporting international collaboration.

Levine emphasized the importance of building on AERA's strategic directions, what AERA has done and is doing, and moving forward aggressively to pursue new opportunities. The Executive Board discussed the need to better feature AERA's accomplishments and disseminate knowledge about education research in more visible ways. Suggested options included disseminating abstracts of journal articles in advance, featuring authors using multimedia strategies, and disseminating timely topical issues cross-indexed with similar articles from archival issues of journals and publications.

The Executive Board took a break for lunch.

## **8. Discussion on Publishing Executive Board Minutes**

The Executive Board discussed the possibility of publishing Executive Board minutes, such as in high-level summary format, so that members can be informed of agenda items and discussion. Levine noted that the Executive Board is advisory to Council and plays an important role by taking up safe-haven thinking, and can be reflective so that it can provide guidance to Council. As a result, recommendations from the Executive Board are reflected in Council minutes. The general sense of the Executive Board is that judicious minutes which reflect topics discussed would be appropriate. The Executive Board decided

to start publishing Executive Board minutes.

The Executive Board also discussed the opportunity of publishing President's and Executive Director's narratives which are topically focused. The initiative will start this summer, and the narratives will be distributed to members and posted on the AERA website on weeks when AERA Highlights is not published and released.

## **9. AERA Awards**

The Executive Board discussed the AERA awards program and the general concern that the number and mix of awards may detract from recipients' receiving adequate recognition. The Executive Board agreed to establish a special committee to examine whether there are too many awards, and to consider different venues and ways in which award recipients are afforded appropriate acknowledgement of their accomplishments, and alternative schedules for the award ceremony and the Presidential Address.

Stevenson briefed the Executive Board on the work of two previous Council-appointed task forces on awards and the policies and procedures approved by Council. The Executive Board will be sent reports from the previous task forces as references to guide future work.

The Executive Board reviewed and approved the following award petitions submitted by SIGs as recommended by the SIG Executive Committee.

**Motion:** To approve the Poster Award proposed by the Studying and Self-Regulated Learning SIG. Approved unanimously.

**Motion:** To approve the Scholar-Activist Award proposed by the Critical Educators for Social Justice SIG. Approved, 6; Abstained, 2.

**Motion:** To approve the Community Advocacy Award proposed by the Critical Educators for Social Justice SIG. Approved, 6; Opposed, 1; Abstained, 1.

**Motion:** To approve the Early Career Scholar Award proposed by the Hispanic Research Issues SIG. Approved unanimously.

**Motion:** To approve the Outstanding Dissertation Award proposed by the Hispanic Research Issues SIG. Approved unanimously.

**Motion:** To approve the Selma Greenberg

Outstanding Dissertation Award proposed by the Research on Women and Education SIG. Approved unanimously.

## **10. Committee Roles and Responsibilities**

Levine provided an overview of the plan to review and rearticulate committees' roles, responsibilities, and charges. Council expressed an interest in undertaking such a review in 2011. An Executive Board Subcommittee on Committee Roles and Responsibilities was appointed, and standing committees were asked to draft revised charges. The Council subcommittee was unable to undertake the synthesis and analysis of data collected before the end of the 2012 governance year. Levine encouraged Council to undertake the review and reiterated the importance of the initiative.

Levine noted that in the 21st-century life of associations, committees may advise on the work of programs and also of the governing board; however, committees in general no longer serve the function of providing member input, since new technologies allow associations to communicate directly and rapidly with members or specialized groups of members by a variety of approaches. As a result, she urged the Executive Board and Council to engage in considering what a dynamic committee structure appropriate to the Association's needs and programs would now look like.

Members of the Executive Board expressed concerns that the reexamination process was not moving forward, as standing committees are eager to receive feedback so that they can plan their work accordingly for the coming year. The Executive Board discussed the need for the subcommittee to review the complexity of AERA's committee structure—advisory, governance, and by-laws related, social-justice related, awards, and others. The Board agreed that Council's turning its attention to this issue at the June meeting was an important next step.

## **11. Audit and Financial Report for FY2011**

Levine reported on a strong year for FY2011 due to above-budget net income

produced by the 2011 Annual Meeting, membership, and publications as well as savings produced by conservative spending and budgeted but unfilled staff positions.

She was pleased to report on a successful audit for 2011 and noted that AERA's independent auditor found that all financial procedures conformed to guidelines. She reported on the work of the subcommittee of the Executive Board (Past President Arnetha Ball and President William Tierney) relating to the audit. Ball briefed the Executive Board on the report of the auditor, who did not find any deficiencies in the internal control or processes of the Central Office and stated that AERA is in compliance with Federal guidelines.

*Motion:* To recommend to Council the approval of the FY2011 audit. Approved unanimously.

## **12. Membership Dues Adjustments**

Levine indicated that the last approval by Council to adjust membership dues was in 2010. The revised dues rates went into effect for the 2011 membership year. She reported on her recommendation, in accordance with a Council-approved process for the Executive Director to review the dues rates every other year and make recommendations regarding adjustments to Council. In recognition of the continued financial challenges faced by AERA members and their institutions, she recommended that AERA hold membership dues at the same level for the 2013 membership year and said that she will reassess and bring a follow-up recommendation to the Executive Board and Council in 2013.

## **13. Staffing**

The Executive Board discussed the new staff positions that will be filled in addition to the search for a new Deputy Executive Director and a Director of Government Relations.

In the area of development, Levine indicated that her current thinking is to seek expert advice and consulting help instead of hiring a development expert to join the AERA staff. The Executive Board discussed how development staff are difficult to hire as development experts

command high compensation and are often drawn to larger nonprofits and universities.

## **14. Annual Meeting Registration Fee Adjustment**

Levine overviewed the recommendation for an increase in Annual Meeting fees, the expanded services being provided at the Annual Meeting, and the rising costs. She noted that AERA registration fees remained quite competitive, pointing to the table of comparisons to other research and research-related associations. She reported that member fees had not been increased since the 2008 Annual Meeting. The Executive Board briefly considered the information provided and agreed that the recommendation would be discussed fully by Council the next day.

## **15. Adjournment**

The Executive Board meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.







