

# Handbook for Regional Coordinators

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## Preface

Regional gatherings have long been important to the Society's activities and its members' interests. In 1982 when *Searching the Scriptures* was published, it was "clear that the regions cannot be regarded as appendages to the parent body, as they may have been in the past. They are integral parts of the whole that must be reckoned with in any projections for the future."<sup>1</sup> That future, however, has confronted the Society and its regions with challenges to their modes of operation, particularly in 2002 with the passage of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. While these regulations challenged the decentralization of the Society that the regions favored, the Society's Council and Executive Director committed themselves to maintaining the independence and distinctiveness of the North American regions and to supporting regional ownership and creativity. In this regard, Council appointed a Task Force on Regions in its October 2009 fall Council meeting and charged the task force with making recommendations on how to comply with federal mandates while preserving the strengths of the regions. To view the full final report submitted to Council, [click here](#).

This handbook was created for the purpose of guiding Regional Coordinators (RC) of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) in the administration of their duties in light of the various regulations to which the Society is responsible. The annual regional meeting is the central activity of the regions. The meeting provides an opportunity to share research, teaching techniques, and develop important professional networks that can support the individual throughout his or her career. Moreover, it is an opportunity for students to enter into the scholarly dialogue that is the academic study of Biblical literature. The SBL also seeks to include non-specialists, religious professionals, and others interested in the academic discussion of the literature, and the regional meetings often provide opportunities for these participants. In general, however, an eye to providing opportunities for and a general atmosphere that encourages the exchange of ideas, sharing of research, networking, and all that goes into the Society's mission of fostering Biblical scholarship should be maintained.

Please note that, unless otherwise specified, any reference below to contacting or sending information to the Society's Executive Office should be addressed to Paige Schmidt at the following address.

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest W. Saunders, *Searching the Scriptures: A History of the Society of Biblical Literature, 1880-1980* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 76

## Recent Changes to the Governance of Regions

Article VI of the SBL Constitution states that “members of the Society, with the consent of Council, may organize themselves into Regions in order to further the mission of the Society.”

The early history of North American regions is recounted in pages 73-80 of Ernest W. Saunders’ *Searching the Scriptures: A History of the SBL, 1880-1980*. Saunders notes that a primary motivation for these regions involved the constraints of travel to the Annual Meeting and a desire to expand opportunities to present research.

Traveling distances, however, made it unlikely that the attendance at the annual meeting would include many from outside the immediate area. Partly for that reason and partly out of the need for opportunity to carry on discussions and to share research results, plans were made for regional consultations that would supplement the general meeting and extend the range of participation.<sup>2</sup>

These regional consultations (meetings) grew quickly, not only in size but also in importance to the Society’s activities and its members’ interests, and the regions’ original iterations subdivided by the 1970s. With such growth, the regions grew from appendages to “integral parts of the whole that must be reckoned with in any projections for the future.”<sup>3</sup>

Since the 1980s the regions maintained this course of growth and integration, but they were confronted with the need to change their mode of operation in 2002 with the passage of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. The Act set forth new, more stringent regulations on non-profits and the mandated ways they report their business to the federal government.

While these regulations challenged the decentralization of the Society that the regions favored, the Society’s Council and Executive Director committed themselves to maintaining the independence and distinctiveness of the North American regions and to supporting regional ownership and creativity. In this regard, Council appointed a Task Force on Regions in its October 2009 fall council meeting and charged the task force with making recommendations on how to comply with federal mandates while preserving the strengths of the regions.

The work of the Task Force identified that SBL members participated in North America on a regional level in two distinct ways, that is, as *annual regional meetings* or *independent regional organizations*. Some regions have a distinctive SBL identity and function de facto as annual gatherings of SBL members within a geographically defined area in North America. Such regions have no legal identity separate from the Society; that is, they do not file federal tax returns and do not possess a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) as they fall under the federal tax return and FEIN of the Society. They must adhere to the Society’s mission and values but are still able to form their own “identity” under that governance. For the purpose of this document, these regions will be called *annual regional meetings (ARM)*.

Some regions have formed limited liability corporations (LLC) and often function as a consortium of several scholarly associations. Legal structures applying to these regions differ from the ones that apply to regions under the Society’s federal tax return and FEIN. LLC’s maintain their own bylaws and are

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<sup>2</sup> Ernest W. Saunders, *Searching the Scriptures: A History of the Society of Biblical Literature, 1880-1980* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 74.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

directly responsible to federal and state authorities for their compliance to legal and fiduciary regulations. For the purpose of this document, these regions will be called *independent regional organizations (IRO)*. By defining the relationship among the Society, its annual regional meetings, and independent regional organizations, this regions administration policy accomplishes several goals and objectives:

- to promote SBL’s engagement on a regional level in North America in order to foster biblical scholarship;
- to reduce risk and liability issues confronted in the course of such engagement;
- to enable the Society to allocate resource dollars more effectively on regional programs;
- to encourage and promote the independence and distinctiveness of the regions;
- to support regional ownership and creativity; and
- to help scale and replicate regional initiatives and programs in other regions and at the national and international levels.

## Regional Coordinator Description

### Summary of Responsibilities

The RC is the principal volunteer responsible for successfully conducting an annual regional meeting for the SBL. In this capacity, the RC serves the members of the Society by providing a Call for Papers, ensuring a fair and equitable process of presentation review and selection, holding a meeting that fosters Biblical scholarship according to the standards valued by the SBL, and participates in the Regional Scholars Award program. The RC is responsible to the Society as a whole and to the Executive Director of SBL specifically in all matters legal and fiscal, as well as in ethical standards of leadership and quality standards of scholarship.

### Appointment and Term of Service

Each region nominates or appoints its RC at the region's business meeting. RCs typically serve three-year terms, renewable once. This information must be sent to the Executive Office (EO) as soon as it is available.

### Key Duties

#### 1. The Regional Meeting

- The RC is principally responsible for the successful administration of all facets of the annual regional meeting.
- The RC must circulate the Call for Papers widely, and in a timely fashion, in order to provide as many of the Society's members traditionally affiliated with the region an opportunity to participate in the meeting. RCs should consult with the SBL EO, which can send emails to members in a region. The RC should compose the email and then give the EO two week's advance notice in order to send the email. Emails will be sent from the RC's email address so that he or she receives responses.
- The RC should encourage new members and student members to participate in the regional meetings. The regional meetings function as one entry point for scholars and teachers into the Society and the field. The RC can do this via regular email communication to members in the region, i.e. not just emails announcing the call for papers or reminding participants to register. Again, the RC should consult with the EO to plan out a calendar of emails to members in the region.
- The RC should oversee the fair and equitable nomination process in his or her region for the national Regional Scholar Award. See below for more information on the RSA program.
- The RC is the volunteer chiefly responsible for operating the meeting on a financially sound footing and for ensuring that the regional meeting adheres to all legal requirements. The SBL Staff is readily available for assistance in this regard, and general information about managing registration is available below.
- The RC is responsible for administering the regional meeting in accordance with the policies set forth below.

#### 2. Relations to the Society

- The SBL will support each region financially and in other ways to ensure that biblical scholarship is fostered on the regional level. The regions form an important entry point into the field for scholars and teachers, including students and others, and provide important services to the members of the Society.
- The RC is ultimately responsible to the SBL as a volunteer officer and must adhere to its policies and procedures.
- The RC must ensure that SBL receives proper and prominent recognition in all communications and at the regional meeting.

- Except in unusual cases demanded by other responsibilities, RCs should attend the meeting of the Regional Coordinator Committee (RCC), which is held on the Friday afternoon prior to the Annual Meeting of the SBL. In addition, the RC should be available to the chair of the RCC for consultation throughout the year, as well as to SBL Staff.
- The RC is responsible for collecting and reporting out to the SBL EO on important demographic data from its regional meetings.

### 3. Governance

- The RC is elected by vote of the members gathered at the regional business meeting and serves a three-year term, renewable once. The RC's appointment is confirmed by the Society's Council.
- Members present at the annual regional meeting may elect by majority vote persons to serve as officers of the region to assist the RC in the operation of regional activities. Officers may serve on the board of an Independent Regional Organization.

### Regional Coordinator Committee

Each RC serves on the RCC. The committee engages in strategic planning for the regions, reports on regional activities, and sets policy for the Regional Scholar Award program. The committee meets in person on the Friday afternoon prior to the SBL Annual Meeting.

### Calendar of Regional Coordinator Work

Feb-May	Regions typically hold their meetings from February through May
By Jun 1	Reports due to EO, including registration information and Regional Scholar Award nominations and materials
By Jun 15	Regional Scholar Award Selection Committee appointed
By Aug 15	Regional Scholar Awardees selected
Aug – Dec	Many regions open and close calls for papers during this period of the year Annual meeting of the RCC Dinner honoring the Regional Scholars (at Annual Meeting)

## Policies Governing SBL Annual Regional Meetings

Regions operating as *annual regional meetings* (ARM) will not have their own bylaws or constitution. They will operate according to the mission of the Society and in compliance with its rules and regulations.

### Request for support, either fiduciary or programmatic

1. SBL will annually budget support for ARMs in consultation with the RCs and the Chair of the RCC.
2. The formal request must clearly define the support, whether fiduciary or programmatic.

### Governance

1. Officers - Each ARM will be responsible for selecting its own RC, governing board (or steering committee), and any other officers as would best serve the region.
  - a. The RC of each ARM will serve as the contact person for the Society's EO.
  - b. The selection process of the RC will be documented and filed with the EO.
  - c. The selection process of a governing board or any other officers will be documented and filed with the EO.
  - d. The RC is required to keep contact information and documentation files current with the EO.
  - e. The same person cannot serve multiple positions on the governing board. For example, a RC cannot also serve as president of a region if both positions sit on the governing board.
2. Review Board - In the case of Officer negligence, the EO has the responsibility to organize a board of Society members for the express purpose of evaluating the Officer's actions and to make recommendation to the Society's Executive Director on appropriate action and whether the Officer needs replacement.
  - a. The RCC, in conjunction with EO staff, will create a document to address the process for the review board to follow.
  - b. Actions leading to the organization of such a board include but are not limited to failure to file required documents with the EO in a timely fashion, misuse of funds, harassment, or any action that violates the mission and policies of the Society.
3. Documentation - Each RC is required to file with the EO in a timely manner (see *Regional Procedure Manual*) the following documents:
  - a. Conflict of interest
  - b. Information Security Policy
  - c. ARM governance policies
  - d. ARM Procedure Manual sign-off sheet
  - e. ARM Officer contact information

### Banking / financial

1. Each ARM must do its banking through SBL.
2. Each ARM will have its own, separate accounting line on SBL's financials.
3. Each ARM will be permitted to carry forward any net gain in a given year.
4. Each ARM will be permitted to draw upon any excess in its accounting line to cover expenses.
5. No ARM will be permitted to carry a deficit.
6. Each ARM will benefit only from the revenues it generates and will be responsible only for its own individual expenses.
7. No funds from any ARM may be used to support or cover the expenses of another region or another operation of SBL.
8. The RC of each ARM will be responsible for maintaining itemized documentation for all financial transactions that do not occur directly through SBL systems. If these duties are assigned by the region to a Regional Treasurer or similar officer, that individual will be responsible for maintaining itemized documentation and filing it with the EO. The RC will be responsible for communicating the name and all contact information of the officer to the EO and to keep that information current at all times.

## Insurance

1. The EO will carry an insurance rider for general liability for each of its regional meetings for which the expense will be incurred by the ARM being insured on its accounting line on SBL's financials.
2. If you are considering expanded insurance coverage for your meeting, please contact the EO at least six months ahead of your meeting. We can assist you with this planning.

## Registration

1. Each RC must sign an Information Security Policy and adhere to the rules governing the handling of sensitive customer information that is obtained during the registration process as stated therein. If any question arises about compliance, the RC should contact the EO.
2. Each RC must maintain itemized documentation on all registrants.
  - a. A final list of registrants should be sent to the EO at the conclusion of each meeting (see Reporting below).
  - b. All onsite registration revenue must be sent to the EO for processing. Cash from onsite registrations cannot be kept against a RC's expenses.
    - a. An itemized accounting of onsite registrations is required by SBL's auditors, preferably kept in spreadsheet format with the following information. [Please use this template](#). Enter information from the registration form into the spreadsheet and then send the spreadsheet to the SBL EO.
      - i. registrants' full name
      - ii. institution
      - iii. organizational membership
      - iv. registration type (e.g., student)
      - v. cost of registration: must be itemized, e.g., if payment is for registration and lunch, subtotals for each must be provided with total of payment
      - vi. method of payment (e.g., cash, check, credit card): if paid by check, check number must be included
    - b. Do not send cash through the mail, FedEx, or other postal service.
    - c. If you anticipate receiving cash payments for onsite registration and have access to a SunTrust bank, please notify the EO in advance of your meeting. The EO will send you a deposit slip that you will use to deposit the cash directly into an SBL bank account. Itemization of the cash payments is still needed.
    - d. If you receive cash payments for onsite registration but do not have access to a SunTrust bank, deposit the cash into a personal checking account and immediately obtain from that bank a certified check for the full amount of onsite registration cash payments. If the bank charges a fee for a certified check, deduct the fee from the deposit amount and include this fee as an additional record in your itemization of onsite registrations. Make the check payable to "Society of Biblical Literature" and mail to the Director of Programs at the EO.
3. Registration revenue typically enters into a single account. For the sake of ease, meeting expenses should be paid using this revenue. After meeting expenses are paid, the surplus revenue should be appropriately apportioned to any parties involved (e.g., SBL-related expenses to the SBL region and AAR-related expenses to the AAR region) based on an agreement between the parties. In the case of a deficit, the amount should be apportioned based on the agreement and billed to the appropriate parties.
4. Onsite registration procedures

## Reporting

1. Each ARM may request from the Society's EO a statement of financial activity and account balance at any time. Statements as a rule will be sent out on the following schedule:

- a. Prior to a regional meeting, the EO will send a statement of financial activity and account balance (six weeks in advance of an ARM's meeting).
- b. After a regional meeting, the EO will send a statement of financial activity and account balance. As a rule this will be completed 4-8 weeks following the meeting. All paperwork needs to be received, expenses need to be paid, and time allowed for reconciliation.
2. Each ARM will file documentation immediately following the meeting (within four weeks) with the EO that includes the following information:
  - a. Call for papers
  - b. Final meeting program
  - c. One-page program report (for possible use in SBL member updates)
  - d. Registration list (including registrants' full name, institution, organizational membership, and registration type (e.g., student))
  - e. Registration statistics (e.g., total number of registrants, percentage of student registrants)
  - f. Itemized documentation showing incoming and outgoing expenses
  - g. Minutes of any business meeting(s)

### Expense Payment and/or Reimbursement General Questions

1. **Where is the request for reimbursement or payment of an expense sent?** To the Director of Programs at the EO.
2. **What if the expense is to be paid by more than one region?** Decide which region will pay the full expense and then invoice the other region(s) for their portion.
3. **When are checks processed?** Checks are cut at EO normally once a week, normally on Thursday i.e. a request for payment on Friday will normally be paid the following Thursday.
4. **Who can approve an expense(s)?** Only the regional coordinator can approve an SBL regional expense. It is the regional coordinator's responsibility to ensure the region has funds on SBL's books to meet their region's expenses, even if that region also has a treasurer. The responsibility falls to the regional coordinator.
5. **Should I have questions or concerns about a payment who is the contact person?** The Director of Programs

### Expense Payment and/or Reimbursement Procedures

1. **Procedure for Regions with sole responsibility for payment of expenses incurred**
  - a. **Reimbursement for expenses already incurred by an individual** (e.g., through use of a personal credit card, check, or cash) should be submitted to the EO for reimbursement and include the following:
    1. Receipts for all reimbursement(s)
    2. Descriptions of expense(s) for coding purposes, e.g., food/beverage, registration, travel, etc.
    3. Approval by Regional Coordinator
    4. Request reimbursement by sending an email and attaching a scan of necessary documentation, followed up by mailing hardcopy; or by mailing all documentation and then alerting EO by email that a request is in the mail.
  - b. **Payment for expenses not already incurred to be paid by check**
    1. Submit an invoice at least two weeks prior to the due date
    2. Descriptions of expense(s) for coding purposes, e.g., food/beverage, registration, travel, etc.

3. Approval by Regional Coordinator
  4. EO will issue payment to vendor
- c. ***Payment for expenses not already incurred to be paid by EO Credit Card***
1. Each usage of EO Credit Card must be approved by EO.
  2. Send request normally no less than four weeks in advance of date on which the charge would be applied. A hotel or other company typically requires a preauthorization form to be filled in that authorizes payment on a given card. Obtain the preauthorization form and send it to the EO for completion.
  3. Descriptions of expense(s) for coding purposes, e.g., food/beverage, registration, travel, etc.
  4. Approval by Regional Coordinator
- d. ***For unexpected or emergency expenses***, please contact the EO immediately. The EO will work with you to handle the expenses.
2. **Procedure for Regions with shared responsibility with another region(s) and/or organization(s) for payment of expenses incurred.**
- a. ***Shared invoice expenses must have all necessary approvals.*** Each region(s) and/or organization(s) paying a portion of an expense must have someone authorize the payment. Only an SBL regional coordinator may signoff for approving a shared invoice expense on behalf of an SBL region.
  - b. ***Decide which organization will make payment and invoice other organizations*** for their portion of the expense.
  - c. ***Submit expense to one region/organization for payment***
  - d. ***Reimbursement for expenses already incurred by an individual*** (e.g., through use of a personal credit card, check, or cash) that are shared expenses should be submitted to one of the regions/organizations responsible for payment of expenses and include the following:
    1. Receipts for all reimbursement(s)
    2. Descriptions of expense(s) for coding purposes, e.g., food/beverage, registration, travel, etc.
    3. Provide documentation designating amount of expense(s) each region/organization(s) is responsible to pay and how the expenses were allocated (e.g., based on registrations of each organization). The EO will review such documentation and method of allocation.
    4. Approval by each region/organization for which a portion of reimbursement has been requested.
    5. The region/organization making full payment will invoice the other regions/organizations for reimbursement of their portion of expense, providing all relevant documentation.
  - e. ***Payment for expenses not already incurred to be paid by check*** that are shared expenses should be submitted to one of the regions/organizations responsible for payment of expenses and can be handles as follows:
    1. Submit an invoice at least two weeks prior to the due date
    2. Provide descriptions of expense(s) for coding purposes, e.g., food/beverage, registration, travel, etc.
    3. Provide documentation designating amount of expense(s) each region/organization(s) is responsible to pay and how the expenses were allocated (e.g., based on registrations of each organization). The EO will review such documentation and method of allocation.
    4. Approval by each region/organization for which it is their regions responsibility to pay a portion of total amount owed.

5. The region/organization making full payment will invoice other organization(s) for reimbursement of their portion of expense, providing all relevant documentation.

For example, a regional meeting involving the SBL and AAR incurs a \$5,000 expense to be split equally by the organizations. The expense with aforementioned documentation and explanation for allocation could be submitted to either the SBL or AAR Executive Office. If submitted to SBL, the SBL Executive Office would settle the bill and obtain payment from AAR for its portion of the expense.

- f. ***Payment for expenses not already incurred to be paid by credit card*** that are shared expenses should be submitted to one of the organizations responsible for payment of expenses and can be handles as follows:
  1. Each usage of EO Credit Card must be approved by EO.
  2. Send request normally no less than four weeks in advance of the date on which the charge(s) would be applied. A hotel or other company typically requires a preauthorization form to be filled in that authorizes payment on a given card. Obtain the preauthorization form and send it to the EO for completion.
  3. Provide documentation designating amount of expense(s) each region/organization(s) is responsible to pay and how the expenses were allocated (e.g., based on registrations of each organization). The EO will review such documentation and method of allocation.
  4. Approval by each organization's Regional Coordinator for which it is their regions responsibility to pay a portion of total amount owed.
  5. The regional organization providing credit card will invoice the other organization(s) for reimbursement of their portion of the expense, providing all relevant documentation.

### Federal and state taxes

1. Each SBL Annual Regional Meeting (ARM) is an additional meeting on SBL's financials and is therefore a part of SBL's yearly audited financials and 990 reporting.

## Policies Governing Affiliation with Independent Regional Organizations

The Society may affiliate with *independent regional organizations* (IRO) that have a mission that does not conflict with the Society's mission but furthers professional collaboration among members of the affiliated organizations. The following are policies governing this affiliation.

### Request for support, either fiduciary or programmatic

1. SBL will annually budget support for IROs in consultation with the RCs and the Chair of the RCC. Requests for regular support as well as additional program sponsorship (such as for awards, travel grants, and special lectures) must be submitted at least 16 months prior to the regional meeting.
2. The formal request must clearly define the support, whether fiduciary or programmatic.

### Governance

1. Bylaws - Each IRO will keep an up-to-date copy of its bylaws on file with the Society's EO.
2. Officers - The bylaws of each IRO must specify that a regionally elected/appointed SBL member serve as SBL RC and be a member of the organization's governing board.
  - a. This person will serve on SBL's RCC as the contact person for the Society's EO and is required to keep contact information and documentation files for the regional organization current with the EO.
  - b. The IRO selection process for elected/appointed RC will be documented and filed with the EO.
3. Documentation - Each RC is required to file with the EO in a timely manner (see *Regional Procedure Manual*) the following documents:
  - a. Regional organization's governance policies
  - b. Regional organization's Procedure Manual sign-off sheet
  - c. RC selection process
  - d. Officer contact information

### Reporting

1. Each IRO will file documentation immediately following the meeting (within one month) with the EO including the following information:
  - a. Call for papers
  - b. Final meeting program
  - c. One-page program report (for possible use in SBL member updates)
  - d. Registration list (including registrants' full name, institution, organizational membership, and registration type (e.g., student))
  - e. Registration statistics (e.g., total number of registrants, percentage of student registrants)

### Federal and state taxes

1. Each IRO must show that it is filing Federal Taxes.
2. Each IRO must show that it is filing State Taxes in states that require non-profits to file state taxes.

## Procedures for Organizing a Regional Meeting

### Scheduling the Meeting

The date and location for the annual meeting is generally set by tradition, and the real need is for publicizing this information to the interested constituency. The agenda of the business meeting at the regional meeting should include publicizing the date and location of the next regional meeting, if not determining them. Some regions meet in hotels, while others meet at hosting institutions. Either way, arrangements need to be secured. Depending on the type of arrangement, the length, and other factors, the spring prior to the next meeting is a good time to make these arrangements, in concert with the scheduling of the conference and its location.

RCs planning SBL-AAR joint regional meetings need to communicate often with each other, directly via email or phone calls. That is a necessity to facilitate efficient meeting planning on matters of coordination and detail that do not need each Region's board involved.

However, when scheduling conference calls or writing group emails between the respective boards, it is strongly recommended that more than one person from each region's board, in addition to the RC, participate in the conversation, call, or email discussion.

### Invitation of Plenary Speaker(s)

Each region has its own procedures for selecting the plenary speaker or speakers for its annual conference. Upon this selection, however, it typically falls (with a few exceptions) to the RC to contact the plenary speaker. This should be done in the late spring. The following are points to establish regarding the plenary speaker:

- Be sure the time and location are clear
- Be sure travel and meal expenses are clear
- If an honoraria will be paid, that should be made clear
- The scope of work expected should be agreed to (e.g., plenary speech, presentation of research in a specific section, reaction to other papers in a section, etc.)
- Written letters of invitation and thanks, as opposed to e-mail files, are ultimately important both for the records of the region, as well as for the professional portfolio of the speaker.

### Corresponding with Members about the Meeting

The EO can assist with email correspondence with members by sending emails to members within the region. The RC must provide the subject, date by which to send, etc., all specified in this [simple form](#). Please note that the EO will not be able to send emails on the same day they are requested; advance notice of at least one week is requested.

### Call for Papers

The next order of business in regard to the regional meeting is to send out a Call for Papers on a broad scale. The timing for this is established by the date of the regional meeting (generally late March–early May), and then working backward. For the logistics of the spring conference and its schedule to run smoothly, the program needs to be set in January, which means that work on the schedule needs to be set in November or December of the year prior, which in turn dictates that a

call for papers be sent out several months ahead of that time, so that a wide number of scholars will be able to consider whether and how to participate.

While all regions are different, the following are ideas to be considered regarding items to be placed in the Call for Papers:

- Give the time and place of the regional meeting. The specific location (e.g., hotel, institution, etc.) should be provided.
- Provide a list of the academic areas covered by the conference (e.g., New Testament, Hebrew Bible, Archaeology, etc.) with complete contact information of the chairs who will be receiving proposals and setting the panels and program for these areas. For each area, a description of the types of papers or presentations sought and panels planned should be specified.
- Provide information about applying for the Regional Scholar Award (see below).
- Provide any information regarding nominations for other types of awards, e.g., student awards, senior scholar awards, etc.
- Any other news or information about your regional conference that may be pertinent.

### Meeting Program Announcement

In the late fall (either November and December), the area chairs should collect and review paper and panel proposals, and build the programs for their respective areas. RCs should work with area chairs to make clear who should contact people who have submitted proposals regarding decisions about their proposals. In any event, the overall program for the conference should come together in late December or early January.

Some points to consider are as follows:

- Scheduling conflicts with individual presenters should be avoided
- Different sections that draw upon the same audience should be scheduled so that they maximize that audience and not compete with each other.
- Locations for sections should be logically considered (e.g., will a section require the lights to be dimmed and so should not be placed in a room with a lot of windows; what about ambient noise from nearby kitchen or reception areas?).
- Where will registration, receptions, and book displays be set up, and will they compete with or complement each other?
- Is there space for smaller groups of people to get together for discussions and planning (e.g., sitting areas, a room with roundtables that remains open for use)?

Once the overall conference program is set, the program book or written schedule needs to be produced and distributed. Disseminating electronic programs by e-mail, along with publication of the program on the web site (see below) is standard. Distribution of the program is best done in mid-January, giving people plenty of time to arrange their travel plans, write and prepare their presentations, and attend to the other arrangements. In this program book, some of the things to include are:

- Information about the hotel or host institution, including phone number, pertinent e-mail addresses, maps, layout/floor plans, or other necessary information
- The program for the conference, including the names of participants, panels and presentations of all the sections, and the time and room location for each.
- Information about the plenary speaker or speaker(s), with a picture, if possible.

- Registration forms and information
- Any other relevant information, which might include:
  - Treasurer's report
  - Minutes from the previous year's business report
  - Award winners from previous year(s)
  - Information about the Regional Scholar Award and other awards, as is relevant

The program book should be sent to the EO of the Society for Biblical Literature for publication on their website.

### Meeting Registration

Logistical arrangements to accept and process registration for the conference are important. Accuracy and transparency for processing registration fees, for generating lists of expected attendees, and for setting numbers for dinners and receptions are parts of the responsibilities of the coordinator, even if these specific duties are delegated to a treasurer or committee.

Items to record include:

- Registration fees recorded and deposited
- Names, institutional affiliation, addresses, and numbers of attendees in general, as well as for specific events where numbers are important (e.g., dinners and receptions)
- Names of SBL members. A list of members attending the regional meetings is an important piece of data for the EO, in order to understand how the Society is serving its constituency. See further details regarding reporting this data below.
- Any other data that provides for better service and discussion among the attendees.

Of course, onsite registration also needs to be arranged, with these and other types of data being recorded.

The EO has been able to manage registration for a number of regional meetings over the past several years and is intent on maintaining this support of the regions. In order to ensure that the process is sustainable, however, we must limit the number of regions for which the EO manages registration and we must develop a standard template with set options. The number of regional meetings for which the EO manages registration depends partly on when in the year that they occur. The office cannot manage four or five meetings in a single month, for example.

Determining how many and for which of the regions the EO can manage registration, therefore, will depend upon the dates of the meetings of the regions that are interested in running registration through the office. Below are deadlines for when registration information would be due relative to the region's meeting date.

- Registration details due to EO (90 days prior to meeting)
- Registration opens (60 days prior to meeting)
- Registration closes (10 days prior to meeting)

Registration could open as early as December 10 of the year prior to the meeting (December 10, 2013 for a meeting in March 2014) and would run through the final day of the meeting. The system would be able to accommodate SBL and non-SBL members and collect registrations for lunches, banquets, or other special events. The system would be able to accommodate credit card payments, and forms for payment by check will be created and posted on the region's website; registrants can fax or mail these forms to the EO for processing. Registration categories and add-

on items such as banquets would be limited, however. The EO will provide each region with a template for such categories.

### Webpage for the Meeting

The SBL maintains regional web pages for all of the regions. On these pages, information about the coordinator of the region and the annual regional meeting are maintained. See <http://www.sbl-site.org/meetings/regionalMeetings.aspx>. Please assist the EO in keeping this information up to date. Many Regions also maintain their own web pages, either individually or with another organization. If your region chooses to create its own site and pages, please send the web address to the SBL offices so that it can be posted on your page.

### Regional Meeting

Regional meetings vary in size and complexity, and thus, the details for the conference will also vary from region to region. In general, however, an eye to providing opportunities for and a general atmosphere that encourages the exchange of ideas, sharing of research, networking, and all that goes into the Society's mission of fostering Biblical scholarship should be maintained. One element that should be consistent in all regional meetings and planned carefully is the business meeting. This session provides an opportunity to accomplish a number of business items, among which may be:

- A treasurer's reports should be made available, discussed, if necessary, and approved
- Review and approval of the minutes of prior business meetings
- Winners of Regional Scholar and other awards announced
- Discussion of problems, goals, opportunities, and future plans

Within this agenda, however, should remain the goal of promoting a collegial, supportive atmosphere that meets the individual goals of the constituency attending the meeting.

### Reporting on the Meeting

Within one month of the conclusion of the regional meeting, the RC should report out on the proceedings of the meeting. This report should go both to the Chair of the RCC and to the EO of SBL as electronic files attached to an e-mail message.

These reports should include:

- An electronic copy of the program.
- Minutes of the business meeting, even though they have not yet been approved.
- Treasurer's report, disclosing revenues of the region for the entire fiscal year, and also the expenses from the fiscal year. Any activity of the current fiscal year to date should also be included.
- Total attendance for the meeting, broken down according to membership (e.g., SBL, AAR, ASOR, etc.).
- Names of the SBL members who attended the meeting, as well as SBL IDs of those members, if available. This is an important element for planning and evaluation, as the Society continually seeks to understand how its constituency is accessing its services. For example, is there a significant constituency that attends and benefits from the regional meetings but does not attend the Annual Meeting? Does the same constituency that attends the regional meetings also attend the Annual Meeting? Are there scholars presenting at the regional meetings who do not present at the Annual Meeting?

In addition, anecdotal information about successes and failures would be helpful as a part of these reports.

## Regional Scholar Award

### Description

1. The Society's Regional Scholars Award recognizes and promotes outstanding entry-level scholars in the field of biblical studies as identified by the Society's Regions. The objectives of this program are to:
  - a. Encourage professional development;
  - b. Lend practical assistance; and
  - c. Establish ties between new and established scholars.
2. Each Regional Scholar Award recipient is recognized:
  - a. On the Society's website;
  - b. In the Annual Meeting Program Book for the year in which the Award is given; and
  - c. At an appropriate award recognition event at the Annual Meeting.
3. An amount of \$1,000 is currently given to each Award recipient to support attendance at the Annual Meeting and to foster future scholarship and professional development.
4. Under the auspices of the program, a mentor may be chosen to provide advice concerning the preparation of a paper for the national meeting and/or publication.

### Application Process

1. Each Region of the Society may select one candidate for the award based upon the following qualifications, requirements, and evaluation criteria. If no applicants satisfy the Region's expectations, the Region is not obligated to select a candidate.
2. Qualifications:
  - a. Currently enrolled in a Ph.D. program and at least ABD (all-but dissertation) where applicable; or
  - b. No more than four years past receipt of the Ph.D. at the time of application.
3. Requirements:
  - a. Presentation at an SBL Regional Meeting of an original work of one's own scholarship not presented at another academic conference;
  - b. Submission of a complete, current CV; and
  - c. Submission of a copy of the paper presented at the Regional Meeting, including print copies of any audiovisual materials (e.g., Powerpoint slides).
  - d. All materials must be submitted to the RC in the Region where the paper is presented. Some Regions may require the submission of materials prior to paper presentation. The RC of the Region in question should be notified in advance of intent to apply for the Award and for Region-specific requirements.
4. Evaluation:
  - a. A crucial element of an application is the oral presentation. Representatives of the Region selected by the RC will observe the applicant's presentation and create a brief written report (fewer than 500 words) to be included in the overall evaluation. The criteria for evaluation of the oral presentation are as follows:
    - i. Clear articulation of argument advanced;
    - ii. Even and engaging delivery (i.e. routine eye contact, tonal inflection, etc.);
    - iii. Clear pronunciation and style appropriate to oral presentation; and

- iv. Creative use of presentation materials (e.g., audio, visual, performance) that aid the presentation.
  - b. Paper submissions will be evaluated as oral presentations, not as research articles submitted for publication, on the basis of the following criteria:
    - i. Clarity of expression and argumentation;
    - ii. Demonstrated knowledge and critical use of scholarly resources and publications related to the topic of the paper;
    - iii. Use and knowledge of the primary sources related to the topic of the paper; and
    - iv. Originality of ideas and solutions developed in the paper.
  - c. Each Regional Selection Committee is responsible for:
    - i. Observing the applicant's presentation and evaluating this presentation in writing;
    - ii. Verifying that each applicant meets the basic requirements for the award;
    - iii. Assessing the written submissions and copies of any handouts or presentations if applicable; and
    - iv. Reviewing the CV of the candidate.
5. Notification of Applicants
- a. Applicants for the Award will be notified by the RC no later than June 1st of their status, that is, whether or not the applicant has been nominated to the Regional Scholar Award Selection Committee.
  - b. In the event that no candidate is selected, all applicants must be notified of this decision by the RC.
6. Following the selection and notification of a Nominee, the Region will forward all materials to the Society's EO, which will distribute them to the Society's Regional Scholar Award Selection Committee.

### **The SBL Regional Scholar Award Selection Committee**

1. The committee will consist of the Chair of the RCC, two to three RCs, and one to two other persons chosen by the Chair.
2. A member of the EO staff will be designated by the Executive Director as an ex-officio member of this committee.
3. Conflict of interest must be clearly avoided when members of the committee are related to the candidate by virtue of institution or any other category that constitutes a reasonable possibility of a conflict of interest.
4. Members of the committee normally serve a term of two years.
5. The Regional Scholar Award Selection Committee is responsible for reviewing all Nominees. The committee will review each Nominee's written submissions and the presentation evaluations forwarded by the Nominee's Region.
6. The committee will review the Nominees and select no more than six to receive the Award. All Nominees will be notified of their status with regard to the Award by a person appointed by the committee no later than August 31st of the same year.
7. For the subsequent Annual Meeting, the EO will contact the Regional Scholars by May 1st of the following year to obtain the following information:
  - a. A short biography and picture for the printed Annual Meeting Program Book and for the Regional pages on the SBL website.

- b. Current contact information for advance registration and housing.
  - c. Information of the Regional Scholars' participation in the Annual Meeting program.
8. Award checks will also be mailed to recipients at this time.  
Prior to the Annual Meeting, the EO will create Award certificates for the Regional Scholars and send reminders of any appropriate Award recognition event

## Region Profiles

### Central States

Type: Annual Regional Meeting

Organizations involved: ASOR, TAK

Founded:

States/Provinces: IL, IA, KS, KY, MO, NE, OK, TN

### Eastern Great Lakes

Type: Annual Regional Meeting

Organizations involved: ASOR, CBA

Founded:

States/Provinces: IN, KY, MD, MI, NY, OH, PA, WV, Ontario

### Mid-Atlantic

Type: Annual Regional Meeting

Organizations involved: AAR

Founded:

States/Provinces: WV, VA, District of Columbia, MD, NY, DE, NJ, PA

### Midwest

Type: Annual Regional Meeting

Organizations involved: AOS, ASOR

Founded:

States/Provinces: IL, IN, IA, KY, MI, OH, WI

### New England/Eastern Canada

Organizations involved: ASOR

Type: Annual Regional Meeting

Founded:

States/Provinces: CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT, New Brunswick, Quebec, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia

### Pacific Coast

Organizations involved: ASOR

Annual Regional Meeting

Founded:

States/Provinces: AZ, CA, HI, NV

### Pacific Northwest

Type: Annual Regional Meeting

Organizations involved: AAR, ASOR

Founded:

States/Provinces: AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Yukon, Northwest Territories

### Rocky Mountain – Great Plains

Type: Annual Regional Meeting

Organizations involved: AAR

Founded:

States/Provinces: CO, IA, KS, MT, NE, NM, SD, UT, WY

**Southeast (SECSOR)**

Type: Independent Regional Organizations

Organizations involved: AAR, ASOR, ASSR

Founded:

States/Provinces: AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, Puerto Rico, SC, TN, VA, Virgin Islands, WV

**Southwest (SWCRS)**

Type: Independent Regional Organizations

Organizations involved: AAR, ASOR

Founded:

States/Provinces: AR, KS, LA, MO, NM, OK, TX

**Upper Midwest**

Type: Annual Regional Meeting

Organizations involved: AAR

Founded:

States/Provinces: IA, MN, ND, SD, WI, Manitoba, Nunavut, Saskatchewan

Below are tables of regional structures and affiliations provided for easy reference.

<b>Annual Regional Meetings</b>	<b>Independent Regional Organizations</b>
Central States (inc. ASOR, TAK)	Southeast (SECSOR, inc. AAR, ASOR, ASSR)
Eastern Great Lakes (inc. ASOR, CBA)	Southwest (SWCRS, inc. AAR, ASOR)
Mid-Atlantic (inc. AAR)	
Midwest (inc. AOS, ASOR)	
New England/Eastern Canada (inc. ASOR)	
Pacific Coast (inc. ASOR)	
Pacific Northwest (inc. AAR, ASOR)	
Rocky Mountain – Great Plains (inc. AAR)	
Upper Midwest (inc. AAR)	

	<b>AAR</b>	<b>AOS</b>	<b>ASOR</b>	<b>ASSR</b>	<b>CBA</b>	<b>TAK</b>
Central States			x			x
Eastern Great Lakes			x		x	
Mid-Atlantic	x					
Midwest		x	x			
New England/EC			x			
Pacific Coast			x			
Pacific Northwest	x		x			
RMGP	x					
Southeast	x		x	x		
Southwest	x		x			
Upper Midwest	x					