

## DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT OF ASR

Like Council members, an individual selected as President will officially begin his or her term in August of the year s/he is elected by serving as President-elect, then serve as year as President, then another year as past President. In reality, however, his or her service not only begins almost immediately upon election, but also requires that s/he execute what may well be the most important single act of his or her term, namely the selection of a Program Chair (see position description). In order to interface with ASA successfully and have materials in place for both our own members and those in other international societies with whom we interface, not only must the Program Chair be selected, but the President and Program Chair must develop with an annual meeting Program topic and a printed program call that includes a rationale for the topic and potential kinds of session subtopics that would be appropriate. This needs to be done no later than June prior to the August in which the new President takes office. The President also writes a "Presidential Letter" that is published in the fall issue of *News & Announcements* after the President has taken office. The publication schedule for this issue requires that the letter be ready on or before 7 November.

The selection of the Program Chair is unique in that it is not subject to confirmation by either the Council or the membership. The only specific rule is that s/he must be a member of the Association. Although the Executive Officer serves on the Program Committee, his/her role is entirely administrative. Ideally any person who accepts nomination for President will already be thinking of a short list of persons whom s/he would want to ask to serve in this position. The Program Chair must simultaneously be extremely attentive to detail, display excellent communication skills, and be someone who is a committed team-player.

The primary role of the President is an intellectual one. Election to the presidency conveys both the right and responsibility to shape the program of one annual meeting of the ASR. To that end, another "early-on" responsibility of the President Elect is to interface with his/her counterpart at ASA toward the building of joint sessions between the two organizations. The initial negotiation for joint sessions must be done at the Presidential level, and ASA now expects specific plans to be in hand well before ASR would normally begin its detailed program planning process. Ideally the candidate will begin this process as soon as s/he is notified of election and has selected a Program Chair. Thus the President-elect must identify persons to take responsibility for building these sessions and function in them. Ideally, ASR would like to have at least 3 joint sessions, with at least one at the ASA venue. We have had as many as four, and as few as none (when we have not acted promptly). Early communication with ASA facilitates greater communication with ASR members about organizing one of these sessions, hence makes the process more inclusive. It is important that participants in the joint sessions clearly understand that they are required to *register for both ASA and ASR* meetings.

Normally, in addition to providing a topic, rationale, and suggested sessions, the President delivers a Presidential Address which is published in *Sociology of Religion*. This is not required by the Constitution or By-laws, but no president has failed to give an address in over 20 years (though some have not provided drafts for publication). The Presidential Address is normally followed by the Presidential Reception. The ASR will arrange and cover the costs of the Presidential Reception, but if the President is able to raise funds on his or her own, ASR will

extend to him/her a discretionary expense account in like amount for program/meeting related expenses. The President's Suite at, and reasonable travel expenses to (up to \$1,000), the annual meeting are provided for the year s/he serves as President. While s/he is President-elect a room allowance (in the meeting hotel, which may be provided in the form of a complimentary room) and a travel allowance of not more than \$500 each are provided.

The President is for all intents and purposes responsible for selecting for his/her annual meeting's the Paul Hanly Furfey lecturer. This must be done no later than the annual meeting prior to the one for which s/he is responsible. Negotiation of the stipend and allowances for the lecturer are handled by the Executive Officer, while the Editor makes arrangements for assuring ASR's ownership of the lecture. The criterion for the Furfey lecturer is very general: "to continue Furfey's tradition of excellence." Beyond that, there is a consensus that no one should be named Furfey Lecturer more than once. (The Executive Officer has a list of past Furfey lecturers.)

The President also has responsibility for awarding Gallagher Grants in two respects: With the Program Chair, s/he uses a portion (currently 1/2) of the Gallagher purse to *recruit* foreign scholars in the process of building the program. Later, s/he reviews the decisions made by the Program Chair and the Executive Officer in respect to the amounts of awards offered to applicants from the membership and for the possible disbursal of any remaining moneys.

The President also has an impact on the life of the organization through its committee structure. Upon assumption of office, the President appoints chairs of all the Standing Committees, who serve during the year of his/her presidency. S/he also appoints two members of the Nominating Committee. In addition, as s/he leaves the office, the president appoints individuals to each committee who will serve three-year terms. Finding persons to serve in these committee responsibilities is not always easy and needs to be undertaken relatively early, especially in the case of the committee members, as a courtesy to the incoming President, who needs to know who will be serving on committees in order to consider appropriate chairs. When need requires, the President also nominates persons to the Council to fill committee vacancies. (Note that while the chair and 3-year position appointments do not require the approval of Council, the filling of vacancies does.) Vacancies on the Council itself are not filled by the President, but by a succession rule based on the original election. As Past President, s/he chairs the Nominating Committee.

The final area of responsibility of the President is to chair, normally, two meetings of Council--one immediately after s/he assumes the office, the other as his/her term ends, plus any meetings that may be called by Council to occur during the interim--and to preside at the Business Meeting of the Association at the annual meeting when s/he gives his/her Presidential Address. As Past President, s/he also introduces, by custom, the current President when s/he gives her Presidential Address. Since the mid-1990s, the President has also presented the Past President with a plaque at the last Council meeting the Past President will attend. If the Past President is absent, the plaque is mailed by the Executive Officer.