
Executive Leadership Vetting Process

Pacific Northwest Region – American Academy of Religion (PNW AAR)

Guiding Principle

Executive leadership in the PNW AAR is understood not as an honorific, but as service oriented, in-person **stewardship of a scholarly ecosystem**. Candidates are vetted not only for academic excellence, but also for service demonstrated, professional timing, collegial care, equity, and task trustworthiness.

This vetting process is designed to ensure that executive leaders of the PNW AAR are academically credible, deeply invested in the region, representative of its diversity, and recognized by their peers as trusted mentors and scholarly leaders.

Vetting Process Effective March 2026

1. Sustained Investment in the PNW AAR Community

Purpose: Prioritize leaders who have demonstrated long-term commitment to the regional guild.

Assessment Criteria

- **Years of participation**
 - Minimum benchmark (e.g., Nominees for the presidential line must be in their *fifth year* or more of **in-person participation** in the PNW AAR to be considered. *In-person participation is necessary because the executive leadership team is responsible each year for executing a successful conference on site, along with other duties.* Nominees for Chief Regional Officer must be in their *fourth year* or more of in-person participation in the PNW AAR to be considered. Nominees for Student Director must be in their *second year* or more of in-person participation in the PNW AAR to be qualified)
- **Consistency of attendance**
 - Regular in-person presence at annual regional meetings
 - Participation beyond occasional paper submissions (for example, serving as a section chair or volunteering in other conference service capacities).
- **Cultural familiarity**
 - Familiarity with the region's community, history, culture, and ongoing challenges

Evaluation Question

In what ways has the candidate shown sustained, relational investment rather than episodic engagement?

2. Leadership & Service Record

Purpose: Ensure candidates have demonstrated capacity to serve collaboratively and ethically.

Assessment Criteria

- Service as:
 - Section or unit co-chair
 - Conference organizing support
- Evidence of:
 - Follow-through and reliability
 - Collaborative and communicative engagement
 - Mentorship of junior scholars and/or graduate students
- Ability to manage:
 - Cross-perspectival engagement
 - Institutional complexity
 - Cross-border (U.S.–Canada) collaboration

Evaluation Question

How has the candidate already practiced leadership in ways that reflect the responsibilities of executive office?

3. Diversity, Equity & Regional Representation

Purpose: Maintain intentional balance and equity in leadership succession.

Assessment Criteria

- **Regional rotation**
 - Commitment to tradition of alternation:
 - Canada
 - Western PNW
 - Eastern PNW
- **Gender representation**
 - Active attention to gender balance across leadership cycles
- **Additional equity considerations**
 - Racialized and Indigenous representation
 - Institutional diversity (R1, teaching-focused, seminaries, community colleges)

- Disciplinary breadth within religious studies

Evaluation Question

How does this candidacy advance the region's commitments to equity and shared governance?

4. Peer Recognition & Scholarly Visibility

Purpose: Confirm that candidates are recognized as respected contributors to the field.

Assessment Criteria

- Regional Conference participation:
 - Regular paper presentations
 - Panel organization
 - Respondent or presider roles
- Peer recognition:
 - Invitations to collaborate
 - Citations or engagement with their work
 - Informal recognition as a "go-to" scholar or facilitator
- Reputation for:
 - Intellectual generosity
 - Ethical conduct
 - Constructive scholarly presence

Evaluation Question

Is the candidate recognized by peers as someone others trust to represent the region and field?

5. Academic Standing & Professional Trajectory

Purpose: Ensure candidates are at an appropriate stage to lead while expanding or advancing their professional progress.

Assessment Criteria

- **Career stage clarity**
 - Pre-tenure/tenure-track
 - Tenured associate/Full professor
 - Teaching-stream, clinical, or alt-academic leadership

- Independent Scholar pursuing research
- Associated field that involves regular scholarly engagement (religious clergy, counseling, etc.)
- **Advancement considerations**
 - Whether the role supports career advancement

Evaluation Question

How is this role developmentally appropriate and aligned with candidate professional goals?

6. Vetting & Discernment Process

Process Structure

1. **Nomination** (self or peer)
 2. **Eligibility screening** using the above criteria
 3. **Confidential consultation**
 - With executive committee members
 - With section leaders familiar with the candidate's service and other community members deemed significant
 4. **Equity & balance review**
 - Assess regional, gender, and institutional representation in the current leadership slate, and past line up.
 5. **Final recommendation**
 - Presented to the executive committee for confirmation before approval for nomination
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How these practices have impacted our presidential line in the past years:

Kristen Daley Mosier – Western part of PNW (WA). Ethics of Ecology and Spirituality. Religious affiliation with the Episcopal Church.

Itohan Idumymoni – Eastern part of PNW (WA). Nigerian. Religious affiliation with (??)

Anne Marie Ellithorpe – Canadian part of PNW. New Zealander, teaching in multiple institutions. Religious affiliation with (Anglican Church?)

Steve Starbuck – Eastern PNW. Gonzaga. Hebrew Bible. Religious Affiliation with PC (USA).

Ronald Clark – Oregon PNW. George Fox. Religious Affiliation with Church of Christ