

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF FRENCH (AATF)

MINUTES OF THE DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

CONDUCTED ON ZOOM

September 21, 2024

President Eileen Walvoord welcomed the attendees (58 when the meeting began) and introduced the members of the Executive Council as well as SHF/JHF President Regina Symonds and the AATF Director of Social Media and Curated Resources, Catherine Ousselin.

She explained that there would be no motions or votes during the assembly since there was no quorum, and that any votes will occur later and online. Delegates will be emailed about the process.

The motions and resolutions were provided to delegates via the event ticket on their AATF website portal.

2024 Convention

Executive Director Megan Diercks reported on the 2024 convention in San Diego. The convention was a great success in a wonderful location, although attendance was down from previous years. There were 171 registrants, 31 via livestream, 29 exhibitors. A total of 80 sessions and 3 workshops were offered. Some changes to the convention included moving the awards to the opening, organizing a “Dîner en ville avec des amis,” and having the first French Karaoke night.

Financially, the convention had a loss of \$95,985, largely due to the high hotel costs, the hotel being the only one that responded to a request for proposals. Hopefully such a loss will not be repeated in Chicago. It should be noted that the convention is a service to membership, and not intended to be a profit maker. That being said, the loss experienced in 2024 should not be repeated. If necessary, the endowment fund can be used to cover costs if absolutely necessary.

Executive Director

Megan Diercks reported that there have been no staff changes in the past year. A new publisher for *The French Review* is being considered, as is copyrighting for the Grand Concours and the SFH/JAF. More features are being utilized in Novi, the new online management system. The Fulbright-Hays application has been successful, and an award in the amount of c. \$115,000 was made to fund a program in Côte d'Ivoire for a group of teachers in July 2025. The application is on the AATF website: <https://www.frenchteachers.org/fulbright-hays-group-projects-abroad-information>.

The AATF will be represented at a number of national conferences in 2024-2025: DLI, ACTFL, SWCOLT, NECTFL, JNCL Language Advocacy Day, Central States, SCOLT. (Catherine Ousselin, via the chat, has volunteered to help at PNCFL.)

The 2025 convention will be in Chicago, July 7-10. The call for proposals is open, and as always, members are urged to take advantage of the room block at the convention hotel, the Palmer House,

since there is a financial disadvantage to the AATF when members choose other options. Upcoming conventions: Boston in 2026, Paris in 2027.

Regional restructuring: Megan Diercks explained the options being explored, one of which would eliminate Region IX, dividing its chapters among other regions, and another that would restructure Regions VI, VII, VIII and IX. The next step will be to meet with chapter officers in affected regions. Such a change will require a change to the AATF constitution.

AATF Budget: Megan Diercks explained the current and proposed budgets. The current budget (the 4th quarter not yet reconciled) has an approximate income of \$680,000 and expenditures of \$640,000. The proposed budget (to be voted on) has been set very conservatively to an income of \$531,000 and expenditures of \$547,000, which would represent a small deficit. A check from the IRS in the amount of c. \$22,000 will be helpful in covering this deficit (due to association's COVID policy of keeping all employees on payroll).

French Review

Megan Diercks gave the report on the behalf of Carine Bourget. Literature continues to be the largest rubric in the publication. A special issue on the Olympics is in preparation. Michel Gueldry has been replaced by Cheira Lewis as managing editor. The contract with Johns Hopkins is up for renewal.

National Bulletin

New editor Jessica Sturm introduced herself. She encouraged submissions, and mentioned a new format for the Regional Representative reports.

Megan Diercks announced the re-evaluation of the current format, with a move to having the full bulletin available only online, with members having the option to receive (for \$4 per year) a scaled-down print version.

Grand Concours

Dawn Fiorilli (for Lisa Narug) reported that there were 44,938 participants in 2024, enrolled by 1,400 teachers. Certificates are available online, so that only medals and plaques are mailed out. There were 21,054 total awards this year. Ordering for 2025 will now be done via the member portal on the national website. An informational webinar will be held on Saturday, October 5.

Société Honoraire/Jeunes Amis du Français

Regina Symonds, President, reported on the numbers for this past academic year. There are now 53 active JAF charters and more than 1,500 SHF charters. A large number of new charters were started this year and several more re-activated. Overall there were more than 15,000 new inductees. SHF/JHF continues to offer contests and awards.

Director of Social Media and Curated Resources

Catherine Ousselin reported that the Shared Resources continues to grow, and she encouraged more contributions. This resource is open and free. People can also add resources created on other sites such as WordWall. She also mentioned the AATF Wakelet, Pinterest, and YouTube sites. Finally, she reminded attendees of the association's presence on social media, including X, Threads, Instagram.

Regional Representative Reports

The Regional Representatives each provided a brief summary of chapter activities in their region for the past year:

- Region I: Peter Vantine
- Region II: Dawn Fiorilli
- Region III: Karen Kuebler (presented by Dawn Fiorilli)
- Region IV: Heather Tedder
- Region V: Ricky Baron
- Region VI: Tom Sapp
- Region VII: Rob Napier (presented by Megan Diercks)
- Region VIII: Jacki Williams-Jones (presented by Megan Diercks)
- Region IX: vacant (presented by Eileen Walvoord)

Commissions Summary

Vice-President Martha Behlow reported that there are new chairs for the commissions on Technology and DEI. Martha Behlow and Eileen Walvoord will be having a Zoom meeting with the commission chairs.

Nominations

Vice-President Tracy Rucker announced the two candidates for Vice-President: Margarita Dempsey (Rhode Island) and Deanna Scheffer (Florida).

Regional Representative Tom Sapp announced that the two current representatives for Region II (Dawn Fiorilli) and Region IV (Heather Tedder) will be running unopposed for a second term.

Eileen Walvoord thanked everyone for attending, and the meeting ended at 11:22 a.m. (Central Time).