



The African Educational Research Network

Web: www.africanresearch.org

**2014 AERN/OUA Summit
Business Meeting
Wednesday, June 11, 2014**

Presiding: Professor David Adewuyi, Senior Academic Officer, United States
Professor Tale Omole, Senior Academic Officer, Africa

Minutes by Professor Linda J. Rice, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, USA

The meeting began with prayer at 9:30 a.m.

Introduction of Delegates: David asked all present to give a brief introduction, particularly being sure to note their name and affiliation. A sign-up was passed around to ensure that we have current contact information, including email addresses for all present.

Opening Remarks: Professor Adewuyi indicated that today's meeting was moved from Friday to today to ensure maximum attendance.

Professor Magagula has not been in touch with AERN since the 2010 Summit at Kenyatta University. We offered prayers on his behalf and saw the need for a new Senior Academic Officer for Africa.

By unanimous show of hands, there was agreement that Professor Idowu Bamitale Omole, Vice Chancellor of Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria would be the new Senior Academic Officer for Africa.

Professor Adewuyi reviewed agreements made at the 2011 meeting at Ohio University regarding AERN dues. Institutional memberships are \$1000.00. Individual memberships are \$100.00. The institutions from which the Senior Academic Officers come will contribute \$2500.00 each.

Professor Adewuyi indicated the need for individuals and institutions to pursue grants to help with funding related to AERN, particularly to attend the conference.

In 2012, North Carolina State University hosted the summit on the US side. The 2016 summit will also be in the US, keeping in mind meetings are held every two years and on a four-year rotation between a US state and an African nation.



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The suggestion was made to enable individual members to go to the website and be able to click, pay the \$100.00, and join. This method could also be used for the institutional memberships.

Evidence of membership is being subscribed to the AERN Listserv.

Dr. Stevens made the suggestion was made to have a link person in more African nations so that the organization is more diverse. Professor Adewuyi's address at yesterday's meeting addressed this point as well, encouraging participation from more institutions. The Senior Academic Officer is responsible for helping this expansion, but the individual members are also responsible for this. Members in the US are equally responsible for prompting growth and expansion of members by US institutions.

Professor Kalyango suggested that AERN conduct a cost-benefit analysis to help potential members see the benefit. He suggested that touting AERN benefits such as the meetings, networking, and peer-reviewed journal could be helpful.

Professor Adewuyi said that the new website is being designed in order to highlight the benefits.

Professor Kalyango inquired as to whether AERN taps into local or regional professional associations, even if just to highlight and promote events on their websites. Professor Adewuyi reminded us that Professor Barnaba Otala brought out this point at the 2010 Summit at Kenyatta University. The website redesign should help this.

The suggestion was made to identify other key organizations that could promote AERN on their website (Action Point: Identify the pertinent professional associations in the US and Africa), to make connections with them, and propose the idea of reciprocity. If we advertise their events, and they advertise AERN events, this could contribute positively to the networking and help growth.

The suggestion was made to form a committee for grant writing. The US, in particular, is thought to have grant opportunities. The contributors should be from both African and US institutions, in full collaboration. Professor Adewuyi asked the person to volunteer to chair the committee and identify four more members in order to move forward this idea.

Action: Professor Abimbade agreed to be the Chair of the AERN Grant Writing Committee. Dr. Stevens and Professor Adewuyi and Earnest _____ (?) also agreed to serve on the committee. Professor Mobolaji Oyebisi Ajibade agreed to be the additional members of the committee.



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Professor Adewuyi emphasized that members present work hard to expand AERN in Africa and the US.

Dr. Stevens suggested two particular organizations that would be good for AERN to affiliate with. Professor Adewuyi emphasized the importance of emailing him with the specific organizations so that Dr. Brookins can link them to the website.

Professor Kalyango shared that the West Africa Research Association has funds available to send faculty to conferences. Professor Kalyango's Institute has hosted individuals from this association in the past.

Dr. Brookins presented the new AERN website. He began by asking who had been on the old/existing website, and if not, why not. He then shared that the new website will have numerous enhanced features, particularly benefiting the peer-reviewed journal, *The African Symposium*.

AERN has hired consultants to help with the website redesign. Rather than hosting the site at NC State or a particular university, the site will be hosted at Word Press. This is essential to enhance portability and make the website less dependent on a particular institution or faculty member.

Dr. Brookins shared screen shots of the new site under development. He emphasized the importance of keeping the site simpler in overall appearance. This will also streamline access to key points.

The top line of the website will include the following:

- *The African Symposium (TAS)*
- Annual Summit
- How to Become a Member
- Contact Us
- Resources

The next bigger dropdown will include the following:

- Welcome
- Current Issue of *TAS*
- News and Notes

The News and Notes section would include things like upcoming meetings or summits or notes from past meetings and summits or Also here, there will be the latest feed of African World News. Additionally we can add feeds for Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. By show of hands,



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Facebook was the preferred social media outlet to pursue as the initial link for the AERN website.

With the new website, people will be able to access the journal directly from the AERN site rather than going to a separate site and then accessing the journal.

Dr. Brookins shared next about changes that will benefit *TAS* review and publishing process. Specifically he showed how AERN is working toward OJS (Open Journal System). Benefits: It's free. It's easily manageable and can be transferred. It allows for an easier and more automatic process for submitting and reviewing articles.

Dr. Brookins shared the *TAS* Workflow Chart. The first column of this chart showed the initial submission of the article to the website (Brookins). The second column showed the move of the article from the website to the Senior Editor (Adewuyi). The third column showed the move of the article from peer reviewers to publication (Author).

In order to submit an article on the website, people must be members and sign in. Then it will be possible to search articles by name, author, or topic. Articles can be downloaded by .html or PDF. The site will include abstracts, brief author biographies, and the ability to search for related materials across the Internet; as scholars, these features are very beneficial.

When submitting articles, authors will be provided with a Submission Checklist. Articles will not go forward until submitted, and this will save the Senior Editor time.

Another step in submitting an article will be an online metadata form. This will ensure a uniformity that enables the articles to be searched online.

Dr. Brookins detailed a five-step process via the Open Journal System that will make it easier to track where manuscripts are in the process. This will include direct notifications to the author who submitted an article. All of these features will contribute positively to the efficiency. In summary, this system will benefit authors, reviewers, and the website manager.

A specific slide in the presentation summarized the benefits of the new AERN website, including the new format for the journal:

- Streamlined
- User Friendly
- Transportability
- Broadly Indexed
- Cost Effective



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Dr. Stevens asked Dr. Brookins to go back to the main page shared from the AERN website and suggested the site could be further streamlined to improve readability. For time's sake, Dr. Stevens will meet individually with Dr. Brookins to talk over particular suggestions.

The suggestion was also made to add a number of visits feature.

Professor Kalyango gave a cautionary measure that there are less reputable journals that are paying writers to have their articles published. He suggested that TAS add a direct statement that the journal does not pay writers. This is important to ensure the integrity of the honest, peer-reviewed process.

Ultimately we want to continue to raise the profile of the journal; therefore increased submissions and selectivity continues to be important.

Professor Adewuyi said that many reviewers have been delinquent, and this is a problem. He would like to be able to tell authors that they will receive a response within three months and therefore emphasized that reviewers be responsible and respond in a timely fashion.

Dr. Stevens suggested referencing *The African Symposium* as *The African Symposium Journal Online* and reference other online African journals as a way to help build a network and also attract scholars to TAS.

Discussion of the Listserv arose, and point made that the Listserv, which includes more detailed information about AERN, is only for members.

Professor Adewuyi asked if there was any other business. There being none, he thanked all for attending and said we would send the minutes.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.