



European Association for American Studies

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EAAS Hybrid Board Meeting Minutes Munich, April 3, 2024

Attendees: President Philip McGowan; Vice President and Board Member for AASSEE Aleksandra Izgarjan; Treasurer Carmen Birkle; Secretary General and Board Member for AAAS Ingrid Gessner; Silvia Martínez Falquina (AEDEAN/SAAS); Mathieu Duplay (AFEA); Andrea Carosso (AISNA); Isabel Maria Fernandes Alves (APEAA); Defne Ersin Tutan (ASAT); Kate Dossett (BAAS); Yuri V. Stulov (BELAAS); Tomáš Kačer (CSAA); Karsten Fitz (DGfA); Theodora Tsimpouki (HELAAS); Michael Hinds (IAAS); Jørn Brøndal (NAAS); Frank Mehring (NASA); Izabella Kimak (PAAS); Adina Ciugureanu (RAAS); Larisa Mikhaylova (RSAS); Suzanne Enzerink (SANAS)

Excused Absences: Tibor Glant (HAAS); Makar A. Taran (UAAS)

Unexcused Absence: Madeleine Danova (BASA)

1) Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 9:32 AM by EAAS Vice President Aleksandra Izgarjan (AI). AI thanks Christoph Straub, Meike Zwingenberger, and Heike Paul and their team for hosting the Board Meeting and for the organization of the 35th Biennial Conference from April 4-6, 2024. AI then reports on the basis of the Chair's Business Report (will be attached to the minutes).

2) Welcome incoming and thanking outgoing Board Members

AI welcomes incoming and thanks outgoing Board Members: Tomáš Kačer (TK) replaced Petr Kopecký as CSAA representative; Kate Dossett (KD) replaced Jenny Woodley as BAAS representative; Isabel Alves (IA) is the new representative for APEAA, replacing Jorge Bastos da Silva; Jørn Brøndal (JB) replaced Alf Tomas

Tønnessen for NAAS; Defne Ersin Tutan (DT) is the new representative for ASAT, replacing Tanfer Emin Tunc, a colleague who has provided exemplary service for this Board and for the Rob Kroes Award committee over many years.

3) Approval of the 2023 Debrecen Hybrid Board Meeting minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. The minutes were approved as presented.

4) Financial Report / EAAS Membership

EAAS Treasurer Carmen Birkle (CB) reports on the EAAS Balance 2023 on the basis of “EAAS Balance Sheet 2023” which was distributed prior to the meeting. Due to fluctuations on the financial market, the Swisscanto portfolio lost value considerably in 2022. It has, however, already considerably improved in value in 2023. Because the investment is closed until spring 2025, a withdrawal from the fund does not make sense now. Next year (2025) a decision about a withdrawal and/or reinvestment needs to be made. CB explains that the sum of collected membership fees does not correlate to the number of members because of delayed payments. Expenses include the travel grants (usually €14.000 to €15.000), €94,38 LEI (Legal Entity Identifier), the costs for the re-design of the website (€892,50), and the expenses for the Debrecen Board Meeting and WN Symposium (€1.083,96). CB reports that the remaining ABN-AMRO Holdings (€1.457,45) are currently inaccessible due to a legal dispute and are held in trust. CB explains that the sum of the EAAS conference grants is less than the sum reported by AI in her report because not all potential recipients actually travelled to Munich. CB explains that her budget plan is based on a conservative calculation because much depends on the future performance of the portfolios.

When asked by Frank Mehring (FM) about the royalties collected from the publications in the series published by Brill, CB explains that the royalties will go to the EAAS bank account.

Philip McGowan (PM) makes a motion to keep the EAAS membership dues at €5,- per association member. AI and Izabella Kimak (IK) second the motion. The motion is carried unanimously.

5) Election of Auditors

Kate Dossett (KD) and Yuri Stulov (YS) are elected to review the financial records. Andrea Carosso (AnC) is elected as third auditor.

6) EAAS 2024 Conference report

Christoph Straub (CS; Managing Director of the Bavarian American Academy) and Heike Paul (HP; Director of the Bavarian American Academy) from the Munich Conference Organizing Team deliver their report of the 2024 conference.

CS reports that the organizing team was fairly small. It was supported by the Board of the Bavarian American Academy (BAA) who served as program advisors with HP at the helm of the endeavor. CS reports that 157 presenters from 31 countries and altogether 245 participants from 35 countries will take part in the conference. CS points out that the cost to accommodate the 40 virtual participants was quite significant; it amounted to €20.000.

HP explains that the conference theme was formulated quite broadly. Comments from Board Members at the 2023 Debrecen Board Meeting were taken into account to craft the final version of the call for papers. The three keynote speakers were chosen to represent the fields of history (Karen V. Hansen), the social sciences (Paul Apostolidis), and literature and culture (Carmen Birkle) respectively. The organizers received about 300 proposals, many of which focused on literary and cultural studies topics. There are no questions from the Board Members, and everybody confirmed their gratitude with a warm applause.

7) EAAS 2026 Conference report

Andrea Carosso (AISNA Board Representative) introduces Elena Lamberti (EL), Professor in the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (University of Bologna) as local organizer of the 2026 conference. EL joins via Zoom. Her connection is unstable which sometimes makes communication difficult. Financing the conference is a major issue, but EL is confident that solutions can be found. PM points out that in 2018 BAAS and EAAS agreed to split 50% of the costs and the revenues. PM further points out that subsidization through participant fees is possible, but the fee must remain affordable for participants. CB adds that a co-financing option (like in 2018) could be possible as the portfolio must be re-invested in the coming year and then funds can be withdrawn.

EL explains that she plans to collaborate with her own department (the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures), the US partner universities of the Alma Mater, the Department of History, and the Department of Political and Social Science.

Because of Easter and other religious and public holidays in the month of April, a conference in April 2026 is not feasible. EL suggests a) the end of March, and b) the second half of May as possible alternatives. A lively discussion ensues regarding the date of the conference. Since no result could be immediately found, the decision was postponed.

AI points out that 2026 is the 250th anniversary of the 1776 Declaration of Independence, which could be one springboard for a topic. EL first hesitates, fearing that there will be many conferences with this topic in 2026. AI replies that it should be possible to propose a specific unique angle that includes the gaps, disputes, and contradictions. It is decided that EL will contact the officers with suitable themes soon.

Upon the request by YS, EL confirms that the organizing committee will negotiate hotel discounts. Beyond hotels the organizing team will negotiate discounts with several businesses.

8) Report on the EAAS website

EAAS Sec. General Ingrid Gessner (IG) reports on the progress regarding the new EAAS website, the redesign is finished, and a Wordpress Content Management System (CMS) is in place to make simple updates and additions. Major structural modifications and security will be the responsibility of the agency. The goal for better security and maintainability was thus achieved. IG thanks EAAS webmaster Vassilis Delioglani (Aristotle University, Thessaloniki) and Jacques Pothier for serving as liaison to the web service provider IONOS France for many years.

IG shows the structure and functions of the new website, which is still housed at <http://eaas.dwm1.de/> but will be moved to a new hosting provider and to the well-known eaas.eu domain soon. The cooperation with the developers of the agency (*Die Webseitenmacher*) has always been good and has unfortunately come to a standstill in the last month. IG is confident that the last remaining tasks can be solved quickly. The news section is intended to be a showcase for all EAAS activities, events, publications, funding opportunities, and much more. For this feature, EAAS has enlisted the help of Ben Atkinson (Digital Communications Manager for BAAS). IG calls on everyone to encourage their members to actively use this feature (once it is launched). IG will see to it that the space the ASN currently occupies on the new website will be significantly reduced, also because the ASN now has their own website <https://americanstudiesnetwork.com/>.

9) Outgoing Officers – Address to the Board

CB begins her address with a smile, stating that behind every great man, there is a great woman. She enjoyed her four years as EAAS treasurer a lot and pointed out that one important insight was the power of collaboration. New avenues have been opened for American Studies.

PM thanks CB, pointing out that for the gargantuan work of moving the trust fund, all EAAS Officers and Board Members are in CB's debt.

PM recalls that when he became President in 2016 one of the first tasks was to keep the Belgian and Luxembourg Association for American Studies (BLASA) alive. He points out that a similar decision will need to be made with regard to the Bulgarian Association next year. He advises Board Members that in order to stay relevant, EAAS must adapt, evolve, and refresh itself continuously. This includes updating the membership with new people on the Board. PM points out that he did not plan to be President for 8 years, but that this circumstance was brought about by the pandemic. He thanks everybody for the brilliant experience he had on the Board and as Officer.

10) Elections Nomination Committee – Presentation of Candidacies

PM introduces and thanks the members of the elections nomination committee (composed of AI, Theodora Tsimpouki [TT], and himself). PM explains that the EAAS bank account will stay in Germany. The tax exemption for the association must also continue to be applied for in Germany. PM presents the following candidates:

Andrea Carosso (AnC), Board Member for AISNA, for the position of Treasurer.
Ingrid Gessner (IG), current Secretary General and Board Member for AAAS, for the position of President.

Izabella Kimak (IK), Board Member for PAAS, for the position of Secretary General – should IG be elected President.

11) Candidates - Address to the Board

AnC addresses the Board Members; IG addresses the Board Members.
No other Board Members come forward.

12) Elections

PM announces the election results:

Treasurer

AnC: 18 yes; 1 abstention

AnC is elected as Treasurer and accepts the election.

President

IG: 19 yes; no abstentions

IG is elected as President and accepts the election. She resigns as EAAS Secretary General.

MP presents IK, Board Member for PAAS, for the position of Secretary General for the remaining two years of the term of office. IK addresses the Board Members.

PM announces the election results:

Secretary General

IK: 19 yes; no abstention

IK is elected as Secretary General and accepts the election.

The meeting broke for lunch at 12.35 PM.

The meeting was resumed at 1.45 PM.

13) EAAS Women's Network International Symposium 2025

As local organizer of the EAAS Women's Network International Symposium 2025, Maria Holmgren Troy (MT) Professor of English and the Director of the Research Group for Culture Studies (KuFo) at Karlstad University, Sweden, reports on the basis of a document which will be attached and sent with the minutes. The Board Meeting is planned for Wednesday, April 9, 2025, and the Symposium for April 10-12, 2025. Hotel rooms have been pre-booked at Scandic Winn (Board Meeting and WN Symposium) and Good Morning Hotel (cheaper option for symposium participants). Several travel options to Karlstad (train, bus, air travel) are described in the attached document; the closest airports from Karlstad are Oslo (Gardemoen), Stockholm (Arlanda), or Gothenburg (Landvetter).

IG reports that the topic of the Symposium "The Gendered Anthropocene" will be officially announced at the Women's Network Meeting on Friday, April 5. The Call for Papers will be distributed soon.

14) EAAS Board Meetings in Karlstad 2025 and in Novi Sad 2027

Jørn Brøndal thanks Maria for her report and asks for the 2025 Board Meeting agenda. PM explains that the agenda will be sent to him by IK. PM asks if travel costs to the Board Meeting will have to be covered by the Board Members; CB confirms this.

AI confirms that the 2027 Board Meeting can be held at her home university in Novi Sad, Serbia. Novi Sad can be easily reached by train from Belgrade. She is confident that she will have plenty of experience once she has hosted the 58th International Congress of Americanists (ICA) from 30 June to 4 July 2025. AI will apply for funding by the US Embassy in Belgrade for the WN Symposium 2027. 2027 will mark the 20th anniversary of the Serbian Association for American Studies.

15) EAAS Board Meetings in 2028, 2029

Mathieu Duplay (MD) reports that AFEA is willing to host the 2028 Biennial Conference, but no final decision has been made by the association. There will be a vote on the organization of the 2028 EAAS conference at the upcoming meeting at Aix-Marseille Université, (21-24 May 2024). If Paris is chosen as the location of the Biennial Conference a collaboration of several universities is the most likely option. Like in Italy, the organization of a conference in April may prove difficult because of Easter, and the month of May might be the better option. It might also be possible to combine the EAAS conference with the AFEA conference in 2028. PM mentions September 2026 (Italy) and possibly September 2028 (France) as possible alternative dates.

IK announces that she has talked to Pawel Frelik and that they would like to host the 2029 WN Symposium and EAAS Board Meeting at Warsaw.

Prague and Belfast are potential options for the Biennial Conference in 2030 and 2032, respectively.

16) Report on European Journal of American Studies

PM reports on the EJAS on the basis of the Chair's Business Report (will be attached to and sent with the minutes). As President, he serves as Executive Editor for the journal. EJAS is indexed in Web of Science Emerging Sources Citation Index and—as of 2020—in Scopus. AI points out that EJAS should also be indexed in the Humanities & Social Sciences Index. AI will take on this task.

PM invites everybody to propose thematic issues for EJAS.

17) Rob Kroes Publication Award

PM reports on the Rob Kroes Publication Award 2023 which has been awarded to Elena Furlanetto for her manuscript "Ambiguity: Dis/Ambiguated Texts and Selves in North America: 1643-1883." An honorary mention went to Francesco Bacci's "Racial Conflicts in Academia: Black Campus Novels." PM thanks the Award Committee team for their work.

Although two good manuscripts were submitted this year, they were the only two. PM is confident that the new website will help to publicize the award and reiterates his annual call to all Board representatives to promote the prize: the winning manuscript is published by Brill in the EAAS Book Series, and the recipient is awarded €500. The deadline to apply for the Rob Kroes Publication Award 2024 is September 30, 2024.

CB asks whether the EAAS Book Series is also open to conference proceedings, and PM confirms this. CB mentions that HP and CS are interested in publishing the keynotes and proceedings of the Munich conference,

18) EAAS Travel Grants and Future of Scholars at Risk Grants (SRG)

AI reports on the EAAS Travel Grants, the Scholars at Risk Grants, and the conference grants on the basis of her report that was previously circulated and will be attached to and sent with the minutes. The new call for EAAS Postgraduate Travel Grants will be sent out soon through various platforms and posted on the website. The deadline is May 31, 2024.

Per the suggestion and motion of AI it is agreed that – besides the usual documents – future applicants have to provide:

- a) a letter from a national association which is a member of the EAAS confirming that the applicant has been a member for at least a year,
- b) a document verifying their enrollment for a higher research degree at a European university.

Although the Scholars-at-Risk fund was terminated at last year's Board Meeting (2023), the willingness to support UAAS and its members once the fighting is over, still stands. In this sense, PM underlines the need to build and sustain bridges of collaboration and support between EAAS and UAAS (with the future in mind). Furthermore, Ukrainians may apply for travel grants and AI asks everybody to direct possible Ukrainian applicants to her.

19) News from Networks and Member Associations

PM refers participants to the Reports from Member Associations 2023-2024 (will be sent with and attached to the minutes). PM asks all Board Members to briefly report on successes and challenges of their respective organizations.

YS reports that BelAAS continues its activities in spite of problems. The May 2024 conference will make no reference to American Studies. Although he would like to, YS can currently not be relieved of his duties as President of the Belarusian Association, which is now forced to call itself "Community of American Studies." He reports that a finished dissertation on e.e. cummings was not accepted, and engagements with Australian literature are equally not relevant. PM confirms the EAAS position that BELAAS will remain part of EAAS.

MH points out the great success of the IAAS Postgraduate caucus. He admits that IAAS is in need of more historians as members of the association.

IK invites everybody to submit paper proposals to participate in the Annual Conference of the Polish Association for American Studies organized jointly with the International American Studies Association on September 25-27, 2024. The theme is "American Hospitality" and the deadline for submissions is May 15, 2024. More information: <https://paas.org.pl/cfp-2024-paas-conference/>

Silvia Martínez Falquina (SMF) invites everybody to the 17th SAAS conference "American Dreams, American Nightmares, American Fantasies" at the Universidad de Alicante in April 2025. The conference commemorates the centenary of Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and PM will be the keynote speaker. The SAAS conference will overlap with the EAAS Board Meeting in Karlstad, but virtual participation in the Board Meeting will be possible.

FM plans a conference on "Locating American Studies in the Netherlands." He regrets to say that the Netherlands is experiencing a conservative backlash, where foreign students are no longer seen as assets.

CB is surprised to hear this, as she has the impression that German universities are still vying for more international students.

IG promotes the annual AAAS conference on "Education, the Arts, and American Studies" from Oct. 17-19, 2024. She invites all Board Members to consider participating and to circulating the call for papers that can be found on the conference website <https://www.ph-vorarlberg.ac.at/aaas>. The deadline for proposals is May 31, 2024.

Tomáš Kačer (TK) reports that CSAA was recently successful to raise the number of PhD student members. He hopes that the new members will form a group for young scholars within CSAA. He says that the death of Josef Jařab (on May 3, 2023) was shattering for the American Studies community in Czechia but also that the ceremony organized for Jařab in Ostrava was nice and consoling.

Adina Ciugureanu (AC) reports that RAAS is doing fine. They have recently seen an increase of support by PhD members but also a decrease of support by older members. RAAS has a new remodeled website <https://raas.ro/> and the latest publication is *Eco-Consciousness in American Culture* (Peter Lang, 2023). AC says that it is a challenge to find a university in Romania that is willing to take over the RAAS Presidency; the next elections take place in 2025. PM suggests that having people from different Romanian universities to serve as RAAS officers might be a solution, but AC doubts that this is possible.

Karsten Fitz (KF) reports that DGfA has created a permanent position for an ECR to serve on the DGfA Board. However, this has led to the ousting of a historian's seat on the Board. It remains difficult to get political science scholars involved in the association. And surprisingly, DGfA struggles to find suitable candidates for their stipends and grants. CB confirms that she has noticed a certain reluctance to spend time abroad (e.g. the Fulbright scholarship has been split up into a one-month stay and another one-month stay). It is suggested that it might be helpful to open the scholarship to all members and not only ECRs to enhance the competition.

TK asks if US Fulbright professors with a specialization in American Studies still come to their universities. Many Board Members confirm that they still host Fulbright professors at their institutions.

KD suggests that the Green BAAS movement might be something to consider for EAAS when moving forward. She specifically points out the successes of the Teaching Network and the BIPOC network.

Suzanne Enzerink (SE) describes SANAS as a small and lively association with a focus on literature and culture. She invites everybody to the SANAS conference on "American Futurisms" at the University of Geneva, 7-8 November 2024. She regrets that the US Embassy Bern has terminated their support for research travel.

Larisa Mikhaylova (LM) invites EAAS Board Members to the RSAS conference on "Sculpting the Future to Build the Present: American Culture and Democracy" in Moscow (with a possibility to present online) on December 4-8, 2024. Suggestions to organize a panel discussion can be sent to larmih@gmail.com until May 15, 2024.

Defne Ersin Tutan (DT) reports that currently only 10 American Studies departments exist across Turkey, whereas there are about 100 English Studies departments. She also reports about a recent controversy the association had on the political level when they chose "Trans*America" as their 2022 conference topic. The next ASAT Conference is entitled "Re* Imaginings and Visions of America" and will be hosted by Yařar University in İzmir (October 23-25, 2024). The deadline for proposals has been extended to May 6, 2024, and the CFP is available at <https://asat-jast.org/index.php/2024-asat-conference/conference-cfp>.

Isabel Maria Fernandes Alves (IA) invites everybody to the next APEAA conference on "Transitions: Freedom & Conflicts" at the University of Lisbon from

25-26 June, 2024. It will be organized together with the 1st APEAA Doctoral Symposium, which is meant as a space of collaboration and mentorship and to promote APEAA membership from this group.

JB reports about the success of the NAAS 2023 conference in Uppsala, Sweden, and invites everybody to participate in the NAAS 2025 conference on “Aspirations” to be held in Turku, Finland, from June 4-6, 2025. More information can be found on the conference website: <https://sites.utu.fi/naas2025/>

MD reports of sweeping cuts universities experience across France. ASAT membership is getting younger, and less and less permanent faculty are getting actively involved. MD invites everyone to the upcoming conference at Aix-Marseille Université (21-24 May 2024): <https://afea.fr/aixmarseille2024/>

TT experiences some difficulties with her Internet connection and refers everybody to the HELAAS report which will be attached to the minutes.

20) Report on postgraduate communities of the EAAS constituent member associations

IG reports that the new EAAS website will have its own tab for Postgraduate Networks and ECRs. She hopes that especially Postgraduates and ECRs will make ample use of the News section on the new website. She asks all EAAS representatives to send her information about postgraduate organizations that is not yet on the website: <http://eaas.dwm1.de/postgraduates/>

21) Auditors’ Report

The Auditors’ Report was presented to the Board. The auditors KD, YS, and AnC report that they examined the documents and found that everything is correct. Their report was accepted by the Board.

22) Closing comments / Final Remarks

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 PM by Philip McGowan.

Respectfully submitted, Ingrid Gessner, EAAS Sec.-General