

**AMERICAN BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION**  
54<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

**MINUTES**

Friday, April 15, 2016  
10:30 am  
Double Tree Hotel by Hilton  
Houston, Texas

***\*\*These minutes will be presented for approval at the 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Myrtle Beach, SC. \*\****

Meeting was called to order at 10:30 am by President Eugene Ogrodnik. President Ogrodnik then led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation and Prayer of Remembrance by James Shoemake, Dallas Institute of Funeral Service

President Ogrodnik introduced Jason Altieri, Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service Program. Mr. Altieri welcomed attendees to Houston expressed appreciation to all for attending the previous night's dinner and visit to the National Museum of Funeral History.

Roll was called by ABFSE Vice President Karl Kann, Worsham College of Mortuary Science, followed by self-introductions of all attendees.

Summary of Official Attendance

- 49 Representatives from Accredited College and University programs  
(+ 23 school guests)
- 6 NFDA representatives
- 3 NFD&MA representatives
- 2 Public members

Institution/Association – Representatives and Guests in Attendance:

Institution / Association	Representative
Amarillo College	Brant Davis
American Academy McAllister Institute	George Connick, Brian Kasler, Judith Kasler, Pamela MacBrayne
American River College	Damon de la Cruz, Valerie Rose
Arapahoe Community College	Martha Thayer
Arkansas State University – Mountain Home	Matt Buel
Carl Sandburg College	Tim Krause; Matt Kendall
Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science	Jack Lechner
Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service	Jason Altieri
Cypress College	Glenn Bower; Jolena Grande
Dallas Institute of Funeral Service	James Shoemake; Wayne Cavender
Delgado Community College	Connie Green-Daugherty
Des Moines Area Community College	Kevin Patterson, Travis Carrico, Dixie Evans

East Mississippi Community College	Octavia Dickerson, Christopher Coleman
Eastwick College	Daniel Simone
Fayetteville Technical Community College	Ronald L. Montgomery, Jr.
Florida State College – Jacksonville	Robert Dean
Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service	Antonio Wallace
Holmes Community College	Thomas Garrett, David Jones
Hudson Valley Community College	Lori Purcell
Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana - Northwest	Nhemya Ward
Jefferson State Community College	Venus Smith; Jzyk Ennis
John A. Gupton College	Steven Spann, Donna Collard
John Tyler Community College	Rhonda K. Pleasants
Kansas City Kansas Community College	Wiley Wright
Lake Washington Institute of Technology	Jamye Cameron
Lincoln College of New England	Paul Warren
Malcolm X College	Karen Scott
Mercer County Community College	Michael Daley, Deb Tolboom
Mesa Community College	Thomas Taggart; Donna Backhaus
Miami Dade Collage	Joseph Finocchiaro
Mid-America College of Funeral Service	Lauren Budrow
Milwaukee Area Technical College	Julian Jasper, Jr.
Mt. Hood Community College	Doug Ferrin
Nassau Community College	Michael Mastellone
Northampton Community College	Tony Moore
Northwest Mississippi Community College	Larry Anderson, Angela Hopper
Ogeechee Technical College	Michele Rupar
Piedmont Technical College	David Martin; Dedrick Gantt
Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science	Eugene Ogrodnik, Barry Lease
Salt Lake Community College	David Hess
San Antonio College	Jose Luis Moreno, Francisco Solis
Southern Illinois University Carbondale	Anthony Fleege
St. Petersburg College	Kevin Davis, Gary Brown
State University of New York – Caton	David Penepent, Ralph Klicker
Tidewater Community College	Frank Walton, Kimberly Jones
University of Arkansas Community College at Hope	Karen Davis
University of Central Oklahoma	John Fritch
University of Minnesota	Michael LuBrant
Wayne State University	Mark Evely
Worsham College of Mortuary Science	Stephanie Kann; Karl Kann, Leili McMurrough
National Funeral Directors Association	Robert Moore, Christine Pepper, Colleen Murphy Klein, Randy Earl, Ken Cahall
National Funeral Directors & Morticians Association	Alexander Wynn, Billie Watson-Hughes, Elois Saucer, Frankie Washington, Ernest Adams, Carol Williams
Public Members	David Edds, Stephanie Jones

President Ogrodnik recognized guests present: Brandon Shaw, Dwayne Calloway and John Kirksey representing the University of the District of Columbia (applicant for Candidacy) and Northwest Texas Community College (applicant for Candidacy).

Because of the conflicting date of the ABFSE and ICCFA annual conferences, exhibitor participation was less than last year which increased appreciation for the vendors who did participate this year: Armature, CANA, Jura/Indigo Interactive, National Funeral Directors Association, National Funeral Directors & Morticians Association, Syndaver, Thanos and The Wilbert Group. Hopefully next year there will not be a conflict and vendor numbers will increase.

President Ogrodnik also expressed sincere appreciation to Jason Altieri, Service Corporation International and the National Museum of Funeral History for their hospitality at the previous evening's dinner and social activity.

A quorum was declared.

Also attending were:

Catherine Gannon, Team Chair

Melton Jones, Team Chair

Robert C. Smith III, ABFSE Executive Director

Sally Pike, ABFSE Executive Assistant

John Fritch, University of Central Oklahoma was appointed Parliamentarian

A MOTION (Altieri) to adopt the Agenda as presented.

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

A MOTION (Dickerson/Hess) to approve the Minutes of the 2015 annual meeting in Jacksonville, Florida was presented.

VOTE: Approved unanimously.

### **Report from ABFFSE President, Eugene Ogrodnik**

Two years ago, Mr. Ogrodnik presented thoughts about the status and tasks of the American Board which coincided with many of the challenges and issues ahead, directly related by the ABFSE Strategic Plan. The American Board of Funeral Service Education seemed "invisible" and some even thought the ABFSE administered for the National Board Exam. Raising the awareness of the American Board was a goal.

There had been little change in the ABFSE "model" of meetings – one meeting after another, with very little accomplished. There needed to be more purpose to these meetings; attendees needed to go home energized after these meetings. We have started down the path and as we go forward we will have more professional development and less "business" of the American Board.

Over the past five years it seemed ABFSE was being criticized for being out of touch, stodgy, for trying to guide the future of funeral directors without paying attention to what the market was saying.

This year we've seen tremendous change. A seed to get a consortium of practitioners to work with the American Board to develop an educational program has been planted. Bring our critics here, tell us what is on their mind, so we can dialogue with them and

move forward.

Mr. Ogrodnik expressed thanks to a very dedicated group of officers who have given a great deal of time, outside of these meetings, to bring about drastic change to these meetings. There is energy here: an energy coming from new program directors – 24 last year and an additional 8 this year. Involvement in committee work is how we move forward; Mr. Ogrodnik recognized those participating in ABFSE standing committees.

Report on the Strategic Plan: On October 8, 2012 the Strategic Planning process began and involved all facets of the American Board. 29 people participated in a day-long session, drafted the ABFSE Strategic Plan, developed a Mission Statement, and a Vision Statement for a 5-year time frame.

The first goal was to expand the communication services of the American Board. Progress has been made. Robert Smith has worked hard, reaching out to industry media and conversing with the media. Members were urged when they have the opportunity to communicate with media, identify yourself as the American Board of Funeral Service Education and raise the awareness of what we do.

The second goal was to improve the financial stability of the American Board. There are many financial burdens of the horizon – copyright of our intellectual property, increase risks and costs of possible litigation, increased regulatory burdens of the US Department of Education, and travel costs associated with accreditation. Hopefully by next year, the American Board will be invisible no longer and better healed financially, still without a registration fee for this meeting.

The third goal has to do with governance and staffing of the American Board and Committee of Accreditation. These issues will hopefully be resolved by the Notices of Motion to be presented later at this meeting. The issue of governance of the Strategic Plan is to increase the “voice” of the American Board.

Goal four streamlines processes – like conversion to paperless. This should streamline the accessibility of documents. Utilizing the products of Armature or Indigo Interactive, hopefully by the end of 2016 we will not be using the same software for self studies, but the software currently being considered by the Committee on Accreditation.

Goal five increases the participation of the membership. Participation in ABFSE Standing committees is an excellent way to become more active in the business of the American Board. (Sign-up sheets were available for members to indicate their area of interest and desire to participate)

Goal six is to expand American Board services. After the ABFSE office is settled in its new location, and a new slate of officers begins their work, there is no doubt ABFSE services will increase. Membership input is vital; attendees were urged to complete the annual conference survey. Streamlining this organization will provide for program time. The American Board will take on a new leadership role in Funeral Service as a resource for the professional.

Goal seven is to improve and update the accreditation standards and guidance.

2017 is a complete Review of Standards.

Thanks to the officers, the Executive Committee, the Strategic Plan has been well executed. Increased electronic communication will allow for more time for increased opportunities of professional development at the ABFSE Annual Conference.

As the Strategic Plan enters the fifth year, it will be reviewed, expended and renewed.

Mr. Ogrodnik expressed appreciation for the committee chairs and committee members for the business accomplished in the past year. Great appreciation was also extended to Robert Smith, executive director and Sally Pike, executive assistant, not only for the planning and realization of this annual conference, but for their day-to-day assistance and dedication to the ABFSE.

MOTION: (Penepent) to accept the President's Report

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

### **Report from the Robert C. Smith III, Executive Director**

Mr. Smith highlighted activities of the past year.

Petitions for Renewal for both the US Department of Education and Council for Higher Education Association were completed in the past year – a process very similar to what schools do for their self study.

Some of the information drawn from the annual reports indicate that currently there are 59 accredited programs; 50 are regionally accredited. There are 10 single purpose institutions; 49 are part of larger universities or colleges. 50 programs operate on a semester basis and 9 utilize quarter basis in terms of their courses. 35 have functional embalming facilities on their campuses, 24 have demonstration facilities only. 30 report that students complete their embalming requirements on-campus only. 42 programs have students embalming in funeral homes, 12 use other locations, which are most commonly the medical examiners offices. Some programs offer more than one degree or certificate option. Combined there are 8 programs that offer bachelors' degrees, 54 offer associate degrees, and 4 that offer certificates or other equivalents to an associate degree. 5 programs offer a bachelors degree completion program. 13 schools in 7 different states offer non-accredited programs designed to meet state license standards only. Enrollment in those programs amounts to less than 10% of total graduates nationwide. Mr. Smith emphasized the importance of completing the annual reports accurately and in a timely manner. Unfortunately, late annual reports delay acquisition of some important information. Cohort tracking and assessment were also requested to be submitted to the ABFSE office with the annual report documentation. Some neglected to provide this information. The increased Administration Probation fee should provide sufficient incentive to complete and submit all reports on time. The updated ABFSE Directory will include individual program statistics.

The American Board doesn't function without volunteers. All persons participating in any ABFSE committee were recognized for their time commitments.

From the Department of Education and CHEA perspective, the Committee on

Accreditation must operate separately from the American Board. COA is a very dedicated group, making sure that the Standards of the American Board are met. COA representatives were recognized – educators, professional members and public members.

Additional highlights from the Annual Report include items that are dealt with on a regular basis in the ABFSE office: 58% of the institutions underwent either a faculty or administrative change. 25% of the respondents to the annual report indicated changes to organization, administrative control or departmental procedures. 25% of the full-time faculty in ABFSE programs are working towards obtaining their Masters degree.

Relative to the NBE and NBE statistics, the ABFSE office receives and reviews requests for NBE exemptions. This year there were 88 separate requests; 47 Arts and 41 Sciences, from 16 different programs. Most were approved – 78% Arts and 60% Science exemptions were approved. Essentially these requests were relative to the NBE being taken more than a year after the completion of coursework.

In the past year the COA created a form to help the institution and faculty track their progress towards completion of a Masters Degree within five years. This is a hard and fast rule. Additionally, Appendix K – Substantive Change - has been updated to include a form to report a change at the school administrative level (President or Chancellor).

The Executive Director also shared enrollment information drawn from the annual reports: Total enrollment in 2015 increased 1.11% over 2014. 2639 new enrollees, 1713 graduates compared to 1449 grads and 2567 new enrollees in 2014. New enrollees represented approximately 45% of total enrollment in the combined programs and graduates represented approximately 29% of total enrollment; these numbers are up approximately 18% from last year. Attrition amounts to about 27% of new enrollees. 11.7% of the programs indicated they had received student complaints of some kind over the course of the year.

The US Department of Education requires us to renew our petition every 5 years. CHEA is a 10 year renewal process with progress reports required at 3 years and 7 years. Both of these reports were compiled and submitted in 2015 with overall good outcomes

The Department of Education expressed concern over:

- Use of specific language in the Manual. As a result, the words “deviate significantly” were replaced by “not in compliance with” the Standards.
- Documentation of conflict policy (we will send copies of signed documents verifying compliance for each COA meeting and site visit in 2016)
- Reference to clock hours without a definition. Since all ABFSE progms use semester hour or quarter hours to assign academic credit or courses, ABFSE will remove reference to clock hours from the Manual.

More importantly, the Department of Education does not approve of our process which essentially gives schools 4 years to improve poor NBE pass rates. Therefore, a new process will be instituted which analyzes a 3-year average NBE pass rate. These rates will be posted on the ABFSE website through the directory. If the 3-year average NBE pass rate is below 60%, schools will have 2 years to address the problem. The 1<sup>st</sup> year below 60%, programs will be put on “probation.” After a 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year, the program will be asked to “show cause” why accreditation should not be removed.

The CHEA report was also very positive. Transparency is an important objective for CHEA. Reporting of pass rates relative to any licensing exam, graduation rates and job placement rates is very important. This information was voluntarily incorporated into the ABFSE Directory last year; CHEA appreciated the initiative. Historically, accrediting agencies make public a list of accreditations granted and the length of time involved. CHEA is saying the public deserves to know the background behind the decisions – what the program does well, what does the program have to do to follow-up stipulations – should be posted on the ABFSE website. This will be included with each accreditation decision following an appearance before the COA. Programs will also be expected to include graduation and job rates on the institution’s website. This information is included in the ABFSE Directory; programs will be expected to transfer the information to their website; it is **not** required in the college catalog.

The process to copyright the American Board curriculum outlines is underway. This process normally takes 9 to 13 months before notification of completion. Hopefully by the October meetings, the process will be completed; if not, certainly by next April.

The embalming textbook is now translated into German and Spanish and we appreciate NFDA’s efforts to make this happen. We are also looking at the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the embalming textbook. Potential authors were interviewed by the Executive Committee yesterday.

The FTC has published new rule compliance. Copies were available during the exhibits. Please make sure you have updated copies for use in the classroom.

It is with mixed emotions that we approach the relocation of the ABFSE office from Missouri to New Jersey. A new office location has been selected but information won’t be officially released until the contract has been finalized. The actual move is anticipated for the month of June.

The ***ABFSE Accreditation and Policy Manual*** states that the accreditation standards must undergo a complete review every 5 years. 2017 is the year for the next review. Following the 2017 April meeting, notices will be sent to all associations representing the profession and the schools. Notices will also be posted on the ABFSE website calling for responses from the public suggesting changes to the Standards. Schools are required to share the Review of Standards with faculty, students and administration. There have been some “piece-meal” updates and corrections, but this Review of Standards will be a complete review of all standards.

Distance Learning is a growing aspect of the delivery of education in the United States. From the annual report, it is indicated that 71% of our programs have some kind of distance learning offerings. 33% of accredited programs offer 50% or more of the funeral service program via distance learning and 18% of the accredited programs offer the complete degree via distance learning. From the 2012-2013 IPEDS report, it was learned that 26% of all students in the United States were taking courses on-line. Two of the on-going issues in distance learning are the requirement of state approval and ensuring that an appropriate method of student verification/identification is maintained. If a program expands to offer 50% or more of the program via distance learning, a substantive change application is required and the on-line aspect of those courses must be

addressed in the self study.

In closing, Mr. Smith expressed enjoyment at being the ABFSE Executive Director, appreciation for the opportunity to appear before the membership and emphasized the “open door” policy, regardless of office location.

MOTION: (Hess/V. Smith) to accept the Executive Director’s Report  
VOTE: Passed unanimously.

### **Report from the Immediate Past-President, Francisco Solis (San Antonio College)**

Concluding his 17<sup>th</sup> year as an ABFSE member and 8<sup>th</sup> year as an officer. Mr. Solis has attended every meeting except 11 years ago, he missed a meeting for the birth of his son. During that time, San Antonio has hosted 5 summer curriculum workshops as well as hosting an ABFSE Annual Meeting. Two years ago, Mr. Solis accepted a newly created position as Director of Learning Assessment and Program Review at San Antonio College, and did so only if the President allowed him to accept the position on full release time from the Mortuary Science division, although he continues to teach 6-hours, so he could complete his service to the American Board of Funeral Service Education. During the first year of his first term as an ABFSE officer, the Strategic Plan was initiated. It is now time to revisit the Plan.

Mr. Solis expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve and contribute to ABFSE and hopes that new members will do the same.

MOTION: (Krause/Penepent) to accept the Past-President’s Report  
VOTE: Passed unanimously.

### **Treasurer’s Report Presented by Jzyk Ennis, Secretary Treasurer (Jefferson State Community College)**

Financial reports and a copy of the budget were not distributed to the membership – not because of a lack of transparency but because the Executive Committee has to wait for the Committee on Accreditation to make a decision on a request from the Executive Committee for an increase in the annual membership fee. The Executive Committee began their meeting yesterday with three different budgets. Based on the COA decision, none of the three were approved. The number that came from the COA was not expected and therefore, a printed budget is not available.

The American Board of Funeral Service Education experienced another successful year financially. Mr. Ennis presented an overview with questions answered by the Executive Director. The organization again had a clean audit with no significant issues. Revenues exceeded expenses by \$146,733.37. Cash on hand in all accounts totals \$686,178.47. In looking ahead, there are several items that are not considered normal operating expenses – acquiring accreditation software, additional programs to be presented during the annual conferences, ABFSE office relocation, curriculum copyright, digitizing and destruction of records, increased costs arising from a complaint to the COA.

The Executive Director presented additional financial notes:



During the Executive Committee meeting, Christine Pepper (NFDA) pointed out that the financial reporting we were using to essentially be “internal” could create some problems because “for-profit” terms (used by the software utilized – QuickBooks) were being used. Some statements might be questioned by the IRS since we are a not-for-profit organization. The changes (suggested by Christine Pepper, NFDA) were appreciated and will be made.

ABFSE operates on a fiscal year, October 1 – September 30 rather than a calendar year.

ABFSE had an on-going appeal to the IRS relative to a concern over a 1099 issued sometime ago for which penalties were paid. Since a final response from the IRS had not been received, the new auditors helped with the appeal. A response was finally received and the appeal was denied. The matter is now considered closed.

The ABFSE 990 tax return for the fiscal year 2015 and the audit completed by Knutte and Associates, are available for review.

Funds have been moved to the highest possible interest bearing accounts in FDIC insured banks, essentially more than doubling interest returns.

ABFSE also received some “found” money. The office received a notice concerning money in unrecovered accounts. Since filing for the funds came without a cost, the request was processed. Enough time had passed that the possibility of receiving any return was forgotten until we received a check for approximately \$1,030.

The office has been very diligent about monitoring expenses and unnecessary spending which is one of the reasons why the financial activities for the last year have resulted in such positive numbers.

The *ABFSE Accreditation and Policy Manual* calls for April review of accreditation fees for billing to go out prior to the start of the fiscal year in October. Statements will be mailed shortly after this meeting, payable by October 1st. A balanced budget has been created that will give the organization approximately \$60,000 that can go towards the reserves.

Question: What is the anticipated cost of office relocation?

\$10,000 has been budgeted. Cost saving factors include the initiation of a Document Retention and Destruction policy. Documents that need to be retained will be digitized and documents which can be eliminated will be shredded. Both will reduce the number of file cabinets to be moved, and the weight of those file cabinets will be reduced. Since the moving cost is weight-based, this will reduce the cost of the actual “move.” Additionally the new location is furnished, which will also allow for less furniture to be moved.

MOTION: (Altieri/Hess) to accept the Financial Report

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Scholarship Committee Report – Robert Dean (Florida State College), Chair**

The ABFSE Scholarship Committee met on April 14<sup>th</sup> with six members present. The total funds available for disbursement was \$12,000 (\$10,000 undergraduate and \$2000 post graduate). 30 applications were received; 8 were incomplete and not reviewed. Four applicants were selected to receive scholarships:

- Lucas Gajewski (Worsham) \$2500 sponsored by NFDA
- Keisha Lawson (PIMS) \$1500 sponsored by NFD&MA
- Amy King (Piedmont) \$1000 sponsored by SCFDA
- Gabriel Schauf \$1000 post graduate award sponsored by UMSEA

Carryover funds will be available for Fall 2016 rewards.

The committee also revised the scholarship application scoresheet, as well as revising the requirements for scholarships, effective after the Fall 2016 meeting. The following changes and revisions will be made:

1. On the scoresheet, the committee eliminated sections 1 and 2 (Financial Analysis sections). Students no longer need to provide their financial records (i.e. tax returns, etc.)
2. A minimum of five (5) funeral service education (non-general education/technical) courses or 15 semester credit hours or it's equivalent need to be completed prior to the student making application.
3. Two (2) letters of verification/reference need to accompany the application:
  - a) One from a Funeral Service industry related practitioner
  - b) One from a program (faculty) director or instructor from an accredited mortuary science/funeral service program
  - c) Letters must be written on professional letterhead.
4. Because some colleges use a numerical grade to report student's academic standing on their transcript, a Numerical Grading Scale Rubric that corresponds to the existing Cumulative GPA Rubric has been created and will be added to the Application Score Sheet.
5. The sections of Work History and Community Service will be combined. Students will need to provide information regarding their work and community service history beginning during their high school years.
6. Scholarship recipients will not be able to reapply for another scholarship for one (1) year after receiving an ABFSE scholarship

Robert Dean's term on the committee has been fulfilled. Nhemya Ward was elected chair.

## **Curriculum Committee – Wayne Cavender (Dallas Institute) Chair**

Activities of the Curriculum Committee since last year's meeting included:

- 2015 Curriculum Workshop, hosted by San Antonio College. Embalming and Funeral Directing outlines were reviewed. The outlines were sent out for review in August.
- The Curriculum Committee met in October to review the comments presented, considered the suggestions and made additional changes to the outlines. The updated outlines were distributed for review. The Notices of Motion for approval of the Embalming and Funeral Directing outlines will be presented.

The Curriculum Committee met April 14<sup>th</sup> with 10 members and 12 guests present. The statement included in outline objectives, “Terms underlined can be found in glossary. Faculty shall adapt the curriculum to meet the geographical, cultural and gender needs of their students” has been revised to read “Terms underlined can be found in the glossary. The faculty shall adapt curriculum to the demographic needs of their students and the communities they will serve.”

The Curriculum Analysis was reviewed and inconsistencies corrected. Outlines are to be reviewed every 5-7 years; reviews are now scheduled to be an average of every 6 years. This will be published on the ABFSE website.

The committee expressed thanks to Colleen Murphy Klein for her efforts to format all curriculum outlines correctly.

Changes to outline “names” will not affect the content of the outlines. These changes will be discussed at this summer's curriculum workshop which will be held at Cypress College, Cypress California. The three outlines to be reviewed are Accounting, Ethics and Communication Skills. The meeting was “closed” prior to review and selection of workshop participants. Participants include:

- Mary Martin – Accounting (Chair)  
Keri Haines  
Karen Scott  
Donita Green  
Mary Rutan
- Gary Brown – Communications (Chair)  
Lacy Robinson  
Martha Thayer  
Patricia Traffas  
Anthony Wallace  
Jeff Zealley  
Brian Mullins  
Damon de la Cruz  
Dede Frank
- Mark Evely – Ethics (Chair)  
Bob Arvidson  
Shawna de la Cruz  
Craig Emmick
- Representatives of Cypress College faculty will also participate

## **Committee on Accreditation – Venus Riley Smith (Jefferson State) Chair**

On December 17, 2015 Robert Smith, Venus Smith, Steve Spann, Billie Watson Hughes and Gene Ogradnik traveled to Washington DC to meet with the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) as part of the ABFSE periodic review by the US Department of Education. ABFSE was given recognition to accredit with three minimum concerns to address:

1. Replace the language of “deviate substantially” (Chapter VI – COA Procedures).
2. Submit copies of signed Conflict of Interest forms to include the COA and site visit teams.
3. Remove “clock hour” from Standard 15 of the ABFSE Policy and Accreditation Manual.

One significant issue raised concerned that the COA is giving schools too long to correct low performance on the NBE before losing accreditation. Standard 11 will be revised and the revised language distributed. A 3-year average of the NBE pass rates will be used to determine satisfactory performance.

During the review, the issue of a 60% pass rate was discussed as an acceptable accreditation standard.

The Committee on Accreditation met on April 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, meeting with five schools and addressed several stipulations from the October 2015 meeting. The Committee stressed the fact that programs must complete action plans and correct stipulations set forth by the Committee.

The COA reviewed nine programs with below 60% NBE pass rates. Eight schools received Warning and one was placed on Probation.

The COA reviewed the Annual Report submissions. Emphasis is placed on completing the Annual Report within the scheduled time period. Too many schools submitted cohort tracking and assessments after the deadline and several schools did not respond. As a result of slow or no responses to COA requirements, the Administrative Probationary Accreditation fee was increased from \$75 to \$500 for late or non-submission of required reports.

The ABFSE office will move to New Jersey following the retirement of Executive Assistant, Sally Pike. Notices will be sent to all ABFSE members once the move is complete. Mrs. Deb Tolboom has been hired as the new Executive Assistant.

The COA took the following actions regarding comprehensive program reviews and site visits:

- One program received 3 years reaccreditation with stipulations for assessment.
- Three programs received 7 years reaccreditation.
- One program was put on Administrative Probation with a \$75 fine for not responding to a stipulation in a timely manner.
- One program will receive a Focus Visit in October 2016 to confirm that stipulations have been met.

- One program's reaccreditation was deferred pending response to stipulations set forth by the COA.

The COA reviewed the Funeral Director component in Standard 6 and the comments submitted. The COA stressed that most tasks on the proposal can be completed in a simulated setting. Following the discussion, the revised proposal will be emailed to schools with anticipated implementation no later than fall 2017.

The proposed revision to curriculum in Standard 6 simply changed the language of the standards to match the curriculum outlines.

Joseph "Frank" Walton, Tidewater Community College was elected to the COA, replacing Jolena Grande, Cypress College as a Public Educator representative. The COA met with the ABFSE President and ABFSE Vice-President to complete the Executive Director's annual evaluation and the proposed FY2017 annual budget. The COA agreed to increase the annual renewal fee by \$2500 over a two year period: \$1000 (total \$6000) for 2017 and \$1500 (total \$7500) for 2018.

The COA concluded their meeting by recognizing Jolena Grande and Sally Pike for their outstanding contributions to the COA.

### **NBE Liaison Committee – Michael LuBrant (University of Minnesota) Chair**

Mr. LuBrant expressed appreciation for the work done by this committee over the past year: Matt Buel, David Hess, Octavia Dickerson, Nheyma Ward, Colleen Murphy Klein, Dr. Carol Williams, and Shawna de la Cruz.

The committee has had two teleconference meetings since the last Annual Meeting.

In 2015, the committee presented two resolutions which were passed by the membership at the annual meeting and forwarded to The Conference, requesting additional data (previous received).

During this year's meeting, representatives of The Conference were unable to attend, but scheduled and participated in a teleconference with the NBE Liaison Committee.

- The Conference response to the request for additional data (test scores, etc.) was that their Board did not feel a policy change was warranted at this time, particularly with the change in the testing environment.
- The Conference response to the request to allow use of a calculator for basic math functions was denied but will be considered in the future.
- In response to a request to update the Study Guide, correct errors and update content, The Conference asked that educators contact them directly to point out errors or concerns.
- The Conference response to receiving a breakdown of content area was that there are no intentions to provide data in addition to that already being distributed.
- Security of the examination is the basis for these decisions and the conversation will continue.
- The Conference suggested a possible "education seminar," explaining the functions of The Conference. This might be extremely helpful, considering the large number of new program directors and faculty and might be a

- program for next year's annual conference.
- Support and participation in the textbook survey(s) is extremely helpful to The Conference.

Mr. LuBrant is stepping down from the committee. David Hess was become committee chair.

### **College and University Council – Michael LuBrant (University of Minnesota) Chair**

The council deals with issues educators might have, discusses Notions of Motions before they are presented to the general membership, and nominates individuals to serve as officers of the CUC (Chair and Secretary) and ABFSE. Anthony Fleege will serve as the new chair and John Fritch was elected as Secretary. Both will serve for the next two years.

The Slate of ABFSE Officers was also presented:

Karl Kann – President  
Jzyk Ennis – Vice President  
Jolena Grande – Secretary/Treasurer

### **Program Committee – Glenn Bower (Cypress College) Co-Chair**

The Program Committee met April 13<sup>th</sup> with six members present

The committee discussed its previous direction as a standing committee of the ABFSE and its purpose and struggles, and the need of the ABFSE office to have more assistance in planning the annual meeting along with the host school. The committee proposed a fillable digital form to be completed by member schools if they desire to host the annual meeting. The form would include the name of the potential host school or institution, their location, dates of any previous hosting opportunity, how often do they, as a school, participate in the ABFSE activities and in what capacity and description of some local amenities available in the proposed area for the annual meeting participants. The Program committee would develop a rubric to evaluate the completed forms once they have been submitted to the ABFSE for consideration. It is the goal of the Program committee to develop a standing five year plan of annual meeting locations in order to facilitate an increase in membership attendance and participation.

The committee recommends working with the member associations to develop the rotational timeline for all three ABFSE meetings: Spring annual meeting in conjunction with the ICCFA or NFD&MA or host ABFSE School, summer Hilgenfeld curriculum workshop in conjunction with the NFD&MA annual convention and fall meetings in conjunction with the NFDA International convention. The committee realizes that 60% of the ABFSE member schools are located on the east coast or in the eastern time zone, 28% are located in the Midwest or central time zone while only 12% of the member schools are located on the west coast or Mountain and Pacific time zones. The location of future annual meetings should reflect these demographics as best as possible.

The committee discussed the need for more involvement with the scheduling of

the annual meeting. The program committee created a program technology form in 2015 in Jacksonville, FL but it was not implemented. Use of the form would allow for a more “hands on” approach to the program development of the annual meeting. Forms would be submitted electronically to the ABFSE office and in turn forwarded to the Program committee for discussion and evaluation through a rubric system. The program of the annual meeting would then be collaborated after the fall ABFSE meeting with the executive committee and the host school.

The committee discussed the need to increase the need and type of exhibitors that would appeal to the membership. The committee also discussed the possibility of future exhibitors receiving a membership discount to have an exhibitor table as a method of increasing the association membership of the ABSFE.

The committee discussed their new role working with the ABFSE office and the potential host school for the Hilgenfeld curriculum workshop. The committee reserved the right to allow a member school to request to host the summer workshop without conjunction of an association partner, but the committee strongly suggests that a member school consider hosting a summer workshop before hosting an annual meeting. The committee will also be creating a fillable form that can be submitted to the ABFSE office and forwarded to the program committee for evaluation for any member school who would like to host a summer workshop. The committee is developing a 3 to 5 year schedule for the summer workshop location as well.

The committee also discussed the need to improve the ability of its membership to receive CEU credits through more modern means. The committee is researching the possibility to use an approved app for mobile devices which would link to the digital version of the agenda and collect the participants log in information. There are several free apps available and the committee will be working with the ABFSE office to further implement the technology to its membership.

Finally the program committee discussed the need to reach out to program administrators who may be limiting the involvement and participation of the funeral service faculty at these annual meetings. The program committee will be submitting a letter of appreciation to those member administrations who were represented at this year’s annual meeting, thanking the schools administration for their continued support in professional development of their faculty. A letter will also be sent to the program administration for those programs who were not able to attend indicating their absence was duly noted and that the funeral service faculty participation is critical to the funeral service program’s success and the success of their students.

Dedrick Gantt and Jessika Jenkins were nominated and voted as co-chairs for the next year. Glenn Bower is stepping down from his position with 1 year remaining on his term, Rhonda Pleasants and William Thompson are rotating off due to term limits. Therefore, there are 3 vacancies on the Program committee.

**Constitution and By-Laws Committee – Francisco Solis (San Antonio College)**  
**Chair**

Mr. Solis recognized members of the committee and expressed appreciation for their work. The committee conducted the following business:

1. Presentation of seven Notices of Motion for approval by the ABFSE membership at this Annual Meeting. These motions were presented for review prior to the meeting.
2. An additional Notice of Motion is being presented for consideration at this Annual Meeting. Copies were available for review.
3. Notice of Motion #6 will be introduced with an amendment to the heading and paragraph 1a:

When the term of any member of the Committee on Accreditation is set to expire, the Executive Director will notify the appropriate constituency of the pending vacancy 12 months in advance.

1a. Educators Representing Public and Private Institutions: The Executive Director will send a notice to all accredited institutions and programs when an educator seat on the Committee on Accreditation will be or is vacant. The notice will specify whether the position was filled by a representative from a private or public institution. The College and University Council will nominate three (3) qualified individuals for each open seat on the Committee on Accreditation. Consistent with Section A2 of Article VI of the By-laws, the COA shall select the new member(s) from the applications or nominees submitted to it by the College and University Council for the applicable private/public seat. In making their selection the COA will strive to maintain the traditional balance of membership with three (3) individuals representing programs in the public institutions and three (3) representing the private, single purpose institutions. (remainder of the paragraph is unchanged).

Mr. Solis explained briefly the remaining Notices of Motion:

- #1 - Gives the ABFSE leadership a voice in the hiring and appointment of the Executive Director, duties currently vested solely with the COA. The COA will maintain the majority of the decision-making responsibility while giving ABFSE officers a voice in the decision.
- #2 - Establishes a Committee on Finance if the Notion of Motion creating an Accreditation Liaison Committee is approved.
- #3 – Updates the By-Laws to reflect the changes to Chapter X, allowing for nominations to the COA to be presented for consideration by the CUC.
- #4 – Establishes a line of communication with the COA through an Accreditation Liaison Committee.
- #5 – Expands the opportunity of the ABFSE officers’ participation in the evaluation of the Executive Director’s annual performance review.
- #6 – Allows the CUC to present nominations to the COA.
- #7 – Updates the voting status of the ABFSE.
- #8 – Revises the process for nominations and appointments to ABFSE



standing committees.

### **NFDA – Robert C. Moore, IV, Immediate Past President**

The NFDA Board of Directors has fully funded participation in the American Board for 2016 – attendance at the annual conference, participation in standing committees and the curriculum workshop, as well as scholarship sponsorship. The NFDA is fully committed to the work done for future funeral service professionals.

Updates to the NFDA website have been completed. The website contains a large amount of information beneficial not only for students and professionals but also for consumers. The ABFSE website is linked to the site and NFDA would appreciate your feedback

Since the 2015 convention, NFDA initiated a new governance structure, another major initiative which covered many years and includes input from ABFSE. The House of Delegates voted to put itself out of existence. This change will allow for individual member voting, firm-based voting, electronic voting, and more member participation in decision making.

Two new educational programs for 2016 include Arranger Training and Cremation Retreat. The Arranger Training program was generated by member requests for assistance at this critical point of contact with families during the arrangement conference. This program is designed to help communicate the value of the funeral, create meaningful life tributes and memorials, and provide the comprehensive tools and resources to initiate these steps during the arrangement conference. A student version of this training will be available Spring 2017.

The newly developed Cremation Retreat offers a must-have certification for everyone offering cremation to the families they serve. The Crematory Certification Operator Program has been offered to approximately 1500 professionals; approximately 28% of attendees have been ABFSE students. The program covers best practices for safe, proper, and ethical crematory operations, excellence in service to cremation families, and much more. Many schools are using NFDA's cremation standards in the classrooms. NFDA is currently in the process of converting this textbook to an e-book format which will be available soon. Schools that have already participated in the program or scheduled in the future include San Antonio College, Jefferson State Community College and Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Burial and Cremation Report will be released shortly. The 2016 report contains research and stats which project the rates for national cremation and burial through 2030. Research is a major part of the NFDA strategic plan. In 2016 NFDA will again conduct a Student Employment Expectation Survey in conjunction with all ABFSE schools. This survey was conducted in 2010 and 2013. Conducting this survey again in 2016 will give clear horizontal data over the years of what students expect as they leave schools in regards to salary, hours worked, job responsibilities and benefits. While this is done with the students, it is also done with the practitioners, providing expectations from both sides. Mr.

Moore encouraged program directors to get their students involved in this survey. The more schools participating, the more data will be gained and available. Each school participating will receive a report, indicating how they compare to the national averages. Students participating will also be eligible for American Express gift cards in a lottery drawing.

Upcoming educational opportunities for 2016 include 75 different distance learning offerings, annual business conference, continuing ed program for certified pre-need consultants and the annual conference in Philadelphia. The annual conference will present approximately 40 educational opportunities.

The “Have the Talk of a Lifetime” campaign continues to promote the value of memorialization to the public.

School membership in NFDA covers all faculty members. Students, with proper verification from the school, are offered free membership.

President Ogrodnik expressed appreciation to the NFDA for their participation and contribution to ABFSE activities.

#### **NFD&MA – Alexander Wynn III, President**

The overall program NFD&MA program for 2016 is Commitment. In commitment, NFD&MA is reorganizing the association for better service – adding new staff, revising the by-laws, **reducing the boards with a five year plan** and on-line voting rights for members unable to attend the convention. The intent of these actions is the betterment of the membership and the organization as a whole.

The GM program is for young funeral directors who are interested in being educated and learning more about their profession as managers.

NFD&MA continues to educate its members and increase membership.

NFD&MA has taken value in a monument of Dr. Martin Luther King. On March 6<sup>th</sup>, NFD&MA visited Selma, Alabama and was recognized for monetary values, upkeep and dedication of the statue of Dr. King. This also bridged a gap in the association.

The 2016 Convention will be in Richmond, Virginia July 30<sup>th</sup> – August 7<sup>th</sup>. The organization has made a commitment to the betterment of the NFD&MA and to bring back the integrity of the association.

NFD&MA is appreciative of the opportunities to participate in ABFSE activities and will continue to provide scholarship sponsorship.

President Ogrodnik expressed appreciation to the NFD&MA for their participation and contribution to ABFSE activities.

## **ICCFA – Report presented on behalf of ICCFA by Robert C. Smith III**

Since ICCFA and ABFSE meetings overlap and are concurrently meeting in different cities a report was submitted by Robert Fells, ICCFA Executive Director and presented by Mr. Smith on behalf of the ICCFA:

ICCFA is the only association in our profession that welcomes everyone under one tent: funeral homes, cemeteries, crematories & cremation specialists, suppliers to the industry, pet loss providers, students, faculty, Jewish funeral directors--EVERYBODY! There is also outreach to veterinarians and veterinary school faculty and students. ICCFA's strength is in that diversity.

ICCFA continuously strives to educate members about what is possible and offers members tools to stay relevant and at the top of their markets in a constant-changing world. ICCFA's 18,000 members represent 9,100 properties from around the world.

ICCFA's government affairs program is a watchdog that is always looking to prevent onerous legislation from being enacted that would negatively affect members' businesses and options.

The ICCFA Magazine is award-winning and has the best readership rates of any publication in our industry.

ICCFA offers a special introductory rate for first year of membership of \$245, which can be accessed via the website at [iccfa.com/join](http://iccfa.com/join). Student and faculty memberships are available for \$35 which is intended to cover the costs of mailings.

Some of the upcoming ICCFA educational offerings include:

- ICCFA University: July 22-27, 2016, at the University of Memphis in Memphis, TN. This is the association's flagship educational event. The five-day program is designed to offer intensive instruction and networking opportunities in a college-campus setting. Participants can attend for just one or two years, or complete the four years and become an "ICCFAU graduate." There are seven colleges to choose from: 21st Century Services, Cremation Services, International Studies, Funeral Home Management, Land Management & Grounds Operations, Leadership, Administration & Management, Sales & Marketing, .and two graduate programs: Master's Program and CEO Program. Complete details are available at [www.iccfa.com/university](http://www.iccfa.com/university).
- ICCFA also offers an Ambassador Program with documents designed to prepare members to represent the ICCFA at any event within profession.

ICCFA looks forward to participating in the 2017 ABFSE Annual Conference.

MOTION: (Hess/Dickerson) to accept all committee reports as presented

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

**Unfinished Business:**           None

**New Business:**

Notices of Motion:

Francisco Solis, Constitution & By-Laws Committee:

Motion to Amend Notice Motion #6 to insert the language presented earlier into 1a and 1b.

Motion to amend seconded and approved.

Motion to present Notice of Motion #7 to the ABFSE membership for voting.

Motion seconded and approved.

Motion to present Notice of Motions #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6 as amended and #8

Motion seconded and approved.

Wayne Cavender, Curriculum Committee

Motion that the Embalming Outline and Glossary with the revisions as shown and subsequent technical corrections be approved for use in the classroom by the American Board of Funeral Service Education.

Motion that the Funeral Directing Outline and Glossary with the revisions as shown and subsequent technical corrections be approved for use in the classroom by the American Board of Funeral Service Education.

Motions seconded and approved.

Following technical corrections made and review by the Curriculum Committee, the outlines will be distributed and made available to the ABFSE membership.

Election of ABFSE Officers for 2016 – 2018:

The Slate of Officers was presented to the membership at the College and University Council meeting. President Ogrodnik called for further nominations for officers from the floor. There being none, President Ogrodnik called for a Motion to accept the Slate as presented by acclamation. The motion was seconded and approved.

President:	Karl Kann, Worsham College
Vice-President:	Jzyk Ennis, Jefferson State
Secretary/Treasurer	Jolena Grande, Cypress College
Immediate Past-President	Eugene Ogrodnik, PIMS

Robert C. Moore, IV, NFDA, administered an Oath of Office to the newly elected ABFSE officers.

Special Recognition:

Presentation of Gavel to President Karl Kann by Immediate Past-President Eugene Ogrodnik.

Presentation of Plaque of Appreciation to Immediate Past-President Eugene Ogrodnik by President Karl Kann.

Gift of Appreciation from ABFSE presented to Immediate Past-President Eugene Ogrodnik by ABFSE Executive Director Robert C. Smith III

Closing Comments: Karl Kann, President

Honored by the association's trust, President Kann acknowledged it is a privilege to join with the leaders of this organization as we move into the future. Mr. Kann stated he was indebted to the officers of the ABFSE, Frank Solis, Eugene Ogrodnik and Jzyk Ennis and ABFSE Staff – Robert Smith and Sally Pike – for their hard work and dedication. His gratitude also includes appreciation for their wisdom, support and most of all their friendship.

Mr. Kann also expressed appreciation to Leili McMurrrough, Worsham Program Director and to Stephanie Kann for 25 years of support.

When welcoming a new president, Mr. Kann stated he always marveled at how it represents a defining moment in transition for the ABFSE. There are points in time where we recognize the lessons and accomplishments of our past, and create the foundations and possibilities of our future. Today we can and should celebrate the future of our organization, all that has been achieved, who we are and everything we will become. In accepting this role of service, Mr. Kann is honored to have the opportunity to share his program initiatives: ABFSE tasks ourselves to examine and supervise funeral service education while protecting the interest of the public and of the funeral service profession. Our purpose is to cooperate with all groups and agencies having interest in the advancement of the principals and standards of funeral service education and insure that funeral service education is of the highest quality and meets the needs of society.

Over the past several years, we have been advancing a plan, one that has taken time and one in which we are beginning to see the experience and positive results. Frank (Solis) began this journey, turning attention towards the ABFSE itself, organizing and developing the Strategic Plan to reassess and re-evaluate our efficacy and realign our goals. With that foundation Gene (Ogrodnik) focused on professional development and strengthening our bond with groups and agencies that have a vested interest in the funeral service profession and offering an opportunity to exhibit here at our annual meeting. This emphasis on collaboration and communication has worked to reinforce our mission and purpose. It is fair to say that none of this would have not been possible without the hard work and dedication of our ABFSE staff.

So what now? Now is the time to advocate. It is time for the message to reach beyond our internal network of the ABFSE and expand our focus outward. Creating a space where voices are heard will require work, educating, and supporting those who are in a position to make change – our professional state and national associations, our legislative committees and lawmakers. Colleagues say they don't involve themselves in advocacy because they have other responsibilities and therefore don't have the time. Advocacy is not a thing that we do; advocacy in its content is everything that we do. We have to make the time on a state and national level. We are the ones in the best position with the knowledge to make informed change. There's no reason why the states should not be looking to us for the educational requirements. We need to change our philosophy from reactive to proactive. It is time for us to take back our narrative. We are not in control of the conversation about education we provide and that must change. We must engage in meaningful discussions about funeral service education on a national and state level. For every story concerning funeral service education there should be a comment or response from a member of the American Board of Funeral Service Education. We need to write our own story. We need to highlight what we think is important. We are the experts. We should be the ones shaping and influencing the perception of funeral service education. Our continued silence is passive consent, allowing others to define our rolls and our place. We have to take ourselves off "auto-pilot." We must take every opportunity to have our voice heard and become involved in the ABFSE. Join your state and local, and even national associations and their committees. Get involved. They need your expertise. Again, you're the experts. It's time to intensify our efforts. If you care about the state of education, professionalism, the future of the ABFSE and its relevance, then get involved. Join me in making this not only an initiative for the ABFSE but also a directive for yourselves. Remember, advocacy can take many forms, not only face-to-face meetings, educating officials, volunteering as members on committees of state and national associations, presentations to community members and numerous other strategies. We are only limited by our creativity and our efforts. The proposal is not easy and will take time. Advocacy is as much about the effort as it is about outcomes, especially since outcomes may not be immediately apparent. Advocacy efforts require patience and perseverance.

My goal as your president is for us to reflect and hopefully answer two questions: What is the role of the ABFSE on a state and national level and how can I make a difference? There is no better way to make a difference than to be an advocate for this profession and to promote policies and practices that highlight what an important responsibility we have to our students, the public and the profession.

MOTION: ( / ) to accept the President's Report as presented

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

Motion to adjourn; approved.

Next Meeting  
April 2017  
Myrtle Beach, SC