

October 2021
New Series
13.2



Theta Alpha Kappa

The National Honor Society for Religious Studies and Theology

PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER

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TAK to Host Online 2021 Annual Business Meeting

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the hesitation of many people to travel to the AAR/SBL Annual Meeting this November, Theta Alpha Kappa will host its 2021 Annual Business Meeting online a week before the conference weekend. Chapter representatives and all inducted Theta Alpha Kappa members are invited to participate on **Sunday, November 14, at 5 p.m. Eastern/2 p.m. Pacific**. The meeting will be conducted online via Zoom:

The Zoom link for the business meeting has been distributed to current chapter representatives by email. If you are an inducted member of TAK and wish to participate in the meeting, please email the society at theta_alpha_kappa_inquiries@ThetaAlphaKappa.org for information.

Our TAK online business meeting is completely independent of the AAR-SBL meeting and its online platform. As such, **it is not necessary for one to be registered for the AAR/SBL meeting in order to participate in the TAK business meeting**. You may download the agenda and other information for the TAK business meeting starting Sunday, November 7, at <https://tinyurl.com/2021TAKbusinessmeetingdocs>. Please note that this file may be updated as needed up until the time the business meeting begins on November 14.

The annual business meeting is a wonderful opportunity for chapter representatives and others to have input on the activities of the national board and to receive updates on financial and other society matters, including the announcement of the recipient of the **2021 Kathleen Connolly-Weinert Leadership Award**.

Another especially important part of the business meeting is the **election for open board positions and announcements of board appointments to fill unexpired terms**. Those elected or appointed will take office on July 1, 2022. This is a busy year for board transitions, in part due to expansion of the board and transition plans for *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa*. The slate of nominees and appointees to be presented at the business meeting includes the following:

-Dexter E. Callender Jr. (University of Miami), appointed by the board as the new editor of *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa* (2022–2027)

-LD Russell (Elon College), for election to an at-large board position (2022–2025)

-Andrea Stanton (University of Denver), presently serving as board secretary (2021–2024), but standing for election to a newly created at-large board position (2022–2025)

-Julye Bidmead (Chapman University), presently serving as an at-large board member (2021–2024), but appointed by the board to fill the remaining two years of the current secretary term (until 2024) pending Andrea Stanton's move to the new at-large board position

-Robert (Rob) Seesengood (Albright College), appointed by the board to complete the last two years of Julye Bidmead's unexpired at-large board term (until 2024) pending her transition to secretary

-Eric F. Mason (Judson University), presently filling the unexpired term of the previous president (until 2022), for election to a full term as president (2022–2025)

TAK Welcomes Three New Chapters

Three new chapters have joined Theta Alpha Kappa during the Fall 2021 semester: **University of Chicago** (Chicago, IL; chapter representative **Erin Galgay Walsh**), **Holy Apostles College & Seminary** (Cromwell, CT; chapter representative **Andrew Blaski**), and **Criswell College** (Dallas, TX; chapter representative **R. Alan Streett**).

New At-Large Board Position Added as *JTAK* Begins Shift to Online Publication

After almost two years of study and consideration, led by present *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa* editor **Bernadette McNary-Zak** and incoming editor **Dexter E. Callender Jr.**, the TAK board voted this summer to begin the process of **shifting the society's *JTAK* from a traditional print-only format to an online, open-access publication**. In conjunction with this transition, the board (as authorized by the TAK constitution, V.1A) also approved the **expansion of the board** to create a new at-large position for coordination of the Albert Clark Awards (from which articles published in the journal are received) and other matters related to administration of *JTAK*. The addition of this new position (effective July 1, 2022) will allow the current and incoming editors to focus on the many issues related to the shift to online publication, and in the future it will provide prospective editors of *JTAK* a transitional opportunity for acclimation to the Albert Clark Awards process and other duties related to the journal before they assume full editorial responsibilities.

Undergraduate Achievement Awards

Local TAK chapters whose code number ends in the digits 0–4 may select one student to honor with the Undergraduate Achievement Award for the 2021–2022 academic year. This award is available to each local chapter every other academic year to promote excellence among undergraduate students, and each recipient will receive a check for \$100 from the national society. Chapter representatives may confirm their chapter numbers in the chapter directory on the TAK website, and they may designate the student recipient for the prize by emailing (from their institutional email account) TAK treasurer Michael Berger at theta_alpha_kappa_inquiries@ThetaAlphaKappa.org.

Website Revisions Continue

As noted in the previous President's Newsletter, significant revisions of the TAK website (ThetaAlphaKappa.org) are underway. As an interim measure, a new FAQs section with updated information for commonly asked questions (including for topics like induction criteria, fees, award programs, and membership status) has been added to the main page, with links to additional discussion of relevant topics elsewhere on the present website. The board's policies and procedures manual has also been updated, while work continues on adaptations to the chapter handbook. Additional, more substantive website revisions are also in process and will be implemented in the coming months.

Akinleye, Hallard Awarded 2021 TAK Graduate Fellowship Awards

The TAK Awards and Recognitions Committee, chaired by Michael Berger, is pleased to announce the selection of **Margaret (Maggie) Akinleye** and **Victoria Hallard** as the winners of the 2021 Graduate Fellowship Awards.

Akinleye (left), our first place honoree, is a 2021 graduate of Wheaton College (Illinois). She is now enrolled in a master's program at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Hallard (right) received her undergraduate degree in 2021 at the University of the Redlands and is now pursuing a master's degree at Boston University School of Theology.



Chapter Representatives Invited to TAK Dinner in San Antonio

The TAK business meeting is normally accompanied by a reception on the Sunday night of the AAR/SBL Annual Meeting, and the board values the reception aspect of this gathering very much as an opportunity to express the society's appreciation for the work of chapter representatives in their local settings and foster conversations in a collegial setting. Because of uncertainty about the level of attendance at the San Antonio meeting and the inconclusive results of the TAK survey solicited in the Spring 2021 presidential newsletter, however, the board decided to hold this year's business meeting online (see page 1) and determined that it was not feasible to host a traditional reception.

Instead of a reception, the society will offer a different kind of opportunity to express thanks to chapter representatives at this year's AAR/SBL meeting: a dinner for up to twenty people at an Italian restaurant (with vegan and gluten-free options) near the San Antonio convention center. **This will occur on Sunday, November 21, at 7:15 p.m. Reservations are necessary, and the sign-up sheet is available at [link removed for online posting].** Those signing up after the twenty spots are filled will be placed on a waiting list. Because of the limited size of the group, we must limit reservations to current chapter representatives. **The deadline to sign up for the dinner is Monday, November 15.**