
Conference

Jessica Boyer, Mount St. Mary's University, Chair

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Jessica Boyer, Mount St. Mary's University, Chair
- Michael Bradford, Wayne State University
- Ezra Choe, Baylor University
- James Estes, Library of Congress
- Craig Kubic, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Liz Leahy, Azusa Pacific University
- Jude Morrissey, Yale University Divinity School
- Michelle Spomer, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
- Gillian Harrison Cain, Atla, Director of Membership and Engagement
- Denise McFarlin, Atla Staff Liaison
- Alexis Weiss, Atla Staff Liaison

YEAR IN REVIEW

The Conference Committee welcomed several new members this year including James Estes as Editor of the *Summary of Proceedings* and Liz Leahy as our 2024 Local Host Committee Representative. The Committee held a planning meeting via Zoom on September 19th. We reviewed the Atla Annual 2023 post-conference survey during this meeting and began planning for Atla Annual 2024. We confirmed the proposal submission process, timeline, and draft conference schedule. The Committee then completed further work via email, including advertising the call for proposals to various associations, listservs, and institutions and rating proposal submissions. The Committee met again in person in Long Beach on January 31 - February 1. During our Winter Meeting, we formally accepted proposals and drafted a detailed conference schedule. Leading up to the conference, committee members coordinated the Memorials video and organized the first conference game night. During the conference, committee members hosted each session. The committee then met again after the conference to debrief the event and note ideas for next year.

ATLA ANNUAL 2024 IN REVIEW

Atla Annual 2024 was held at the Hilton Long Beach as well as virtually, June 19-22. The conference opened with plenary speaker Dr. Amir Hussain, Professor of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University. Dr. Hussain spoke to “Comparative Religion and Theology: Practical, not Theoretical Matters for Atla” and provided an engaging start to the conference. Then, Dr. Lynn Silipigni Conaway helped us think about “Redefining the Library Experience: Looking Upwards and Outwards” to conclude the conference and leave us with a vision for the future.

Overall, Atla Annual 2024 consisted of 36 concurrent sessions, two worship services, three post-conference workshops, and Atla’s annual association update and business meeting. These sessions provided engaging and innovative content that allowed attendees to learn and grow as professionals. For the first time, we had sessions with *artificial intelligence or AI* in the session title. This new development marks what will likely be a historic trend in our field, and I appreciate the numerous presenters who taught us about this emerging trend. Meanwhile, we did not have a session with *pandemic* in the title for the first time in several years. I am grateful that we have found ways to recover and respond to the challenges our libraries have faced in the last four years. This spirit of innovation, collaboration, and community will allow us to continue to face the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for our libraries and institutions.

ATLA ANNUAL 2024: BY THE NUMBERS

Whether in-person or online, our community of members and attendees is a hallmark of what makes Atla Annual such a great conference. This year’s conference included 225 attendees, 118 of whom joined us in person, 107 online, and 47 for the first time. We also had 22 international attendees, with ten individuals joining us from outside North America. In the spirit of fostering community, we held the first Atla Annual Game Night. Nearly 30 attendees gathered for a fun evening of friendly competition and camaraderie. Additional members gathered virtually in the two weeks following the conference as six interest groups and six denominational groups held their annual business meetings.

CONCLUSION

Many individuals have made the work of the committee and the annual conference successful. I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the committee members and Atla staff liaisons. Your contributions are deeply appreciated, and working with all of you is a pleasure. Thank you also to Liz Leahy and the members of SCATLA, who hosted us and provided a warm welcome to Long Beach. I would also like to acknowledge Brinna Michael and the Technical Services Interest Group, who hosted a workshop in December on submitting an Atla Annual proposal. Finally, thank you to our many attendees; your participation, presentations, discussions, and contributions provided an enriching conference experience for all of us. I look forward to seeing you in Pittsburgh for Atla Annual 2025 Conference.