

**AMERICAN BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION**  
53rd ANNUAL MEETING

**MINUTES**

Friday, April 17, 2015  
10:30 am  
Crowne Plaza Riverfront Hotel  
Jacksonville, Florida

Meeting was called to order by President Eugene Ogrodnik, at 10:30 a.m.

A MOTION to accept all guests was presented.

VOTE: Passed unanimously

Presentation of Colors by the Fraternal Order of Police/Sheriffs Office followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The “National Anthem” was played by saxophonist Morton Perry, Florida State College – Jacksonville, Funeral Service, Class of 2011.

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

President Ogrodnik introduced Robert Dean, “host” from Florida State College – Jacksonville Funeral Service Program. Mr. Dean welcomed attendees to Jacksonville and introduced Dr. Sandy Robinson, North Campus President and Mr. Jody Brandenburg, Chairman of the Florida State Board of Funeral, Cemetery and Consumer Services who gave additional welcoming comments.

John Fritch, University of Central Oklahoma was appointed Parliamentarian.

Roll was called by ABFSE Vice President Karl Kann, Worsham College of Mortuary Science

Summary of Official Attendance

49 Representatives from Accredited College and University programs

(+ 23 school guests)

6 NFDA representatives

3 NFD&MA representatives

Institution/Association – Representatives and Guests in Attendance:

Institution / Association	Representative
Amarillo College	Scott Rankin
American River College	Damon de la Cruz
Arapahoe Community College	Martha Thayer
Arkansas State University – Mountain Home	Matt Buel, Brad Sheppard
Bishop State Community College	William Thompson
Carl Sandburg College	Tim Krause; Matt Kendall
Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science	Teresa Dutko
Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service	Jason Altieri

Cypress College	Glenn Bower; Jolena Grande, David McCament
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
Fayetteville Technical Community College	Leslie Keenun
FINE Mortuary College	Kevin Koch, Susan Burke
Florida State College – Jacksonville	Robert Dean
Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service	Walter Crox
Hudson Valley Community College	Elaine Reinhard, 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, Anne Chepulis
Mercer County Community College	Michael Daley
Mesa Community College	Thomas Taggart; Donna Backhaus
Miami Dade Collage	Joseph Finocchiaro
Mid-America College of Funeral Service	Lauren Budrow
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College	Bill Harvey, Angie Nelson
Mt. Hood Community College	Doug Ferrin
Nassau Community College	Michael Mastellone
Northampton Community College	Tony Moore, Patricia Werner
Ogeechee Technical College	Michele Rupar
Piedmont Technical College	David Martin; Dedrick Gantt
Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science	Eugene Ogrodnik
Salt Lake Community College	David Hess, Jeff Zealley
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
Vincennes University	Jonathan DeHart
Wayne State University	Mark Evely
Worsham College of Mortuary Science	Stephanie Kann; Karl Kann
National Funeral Directors Association	Robert Bates, Robert Moore, Michael St. Pierre, Colleen Murphy Klein, Randy Earl, Ken Cahall
National Funeral Directors & Morticians Association	Jamye Cameron, Billie Watson-Hughes, Elois Saucer
Public Members	David Edds, Stephanie Jones

52 of 63 members present. A quorum was declared.

Also attending were:

Catherine Gannon, Team Chair  
Melton Jones, Team Chair  
David Coughran, St. Louis Community College  
Bob Boetticher, Jr. and Barbara Kemmis, CANA  
Alisha Carr and Andrea Karels, Kelco  
Robert C. Smith III, ABFSE Executive Director  
Sally Pike, ABFSE Executive Assistant

A special presentation was made by Robert C. Smith, Jason Altieri and Jonathan DeHart: Michael St. Pierre was recognized as ABFSE Professional of the Year. This award, normally presented at the Annual Awards Luncheon, was presented during the Annual Meeting due to Mr. St. Pierre's travel schedule.

A MOTION to adopt the Agenda as presented.

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

A MOTION to approve the Minutes of the 2014 annual meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota was presented.

VOTE: Approved unanimously.

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

Mr. Smith recognized Sally Pike, ABFSE Executive Assistant for her efforts in coordinating the Annual Meeting and Robert Dean, Florida State College – Jacksonville, who organized for the meeting's registration, Color Guard presentation, and the program activities at Florida State College.

During the past 15 months, Mr. Smith has traveled from New Jersey to Missouri, Florida to Washington. He has represented the ABFSE at meetings in Chicago and Washington, DC, three times each, visited 19 of the accredited programs and attended the annual conventions of the NFDA, NFD&MA and ICCFA. He has scheduled 21 team visits and participated in two focus visits. During this time, Mr. Smith learned how the ABFSE functions relative to the larger accreditation community.

We need to pay particular attention to the United States Department of Education and CHEA, the Council for Higher Education Association, as these are the organizations that allow the ABFSE to accredit Funeral Service rather than some other accrediting agency, guaranteeing that funeral service programs are evaluated by a group of your peers.

One thing that has become particularly important in our accrediting activities is transparency – that *our* accrediting agencies, and the public as well, knows what we are doing. It is no longer adequate to announce that a program has been reaccredited for seven years; we have to identify *why* the program has been reaccredited for seven years. Conversely, if negative action is taken against a school's accreditation, we must be specific in *why* negative action was taken. We have to present specific information to the public.

The 2014 annual reports gathered the following statistics:

- 2,567 new enrollees
- These new students came from 49 states plus the District of Columbia and six foreign countries. The only state not represented was Hawaii.
- New York and Texas each had 200+ enrollees in their ABFSE programs
- There was a 7% decline in enrollment over 2013. This number would be improved if our programs in Candidacy were included.
- 1,449 graduated from accredited programs, representing 48 states plus the District of Columbia. No graduates were identified from Hawaii and Nevada; five graduates were from foreign countries.
- 100 or more graduates called New York, Texas or Pennsylvania “home.”
- Of our graduates, 75% were Caucasian, 16% African-American and 6% Latino.
- Overall the graduate data represents approximately a 6.2% decline from 2013.

Changes in the Annual Report delayed the processing of the statistical data. As a result, the 2014 statistical data could not be released prior to this meeting. Hopefully all reports can be finalized soon so the statistical reports can be distributed following this meeting.

There will be additional changes in the 2015 Annual Report. In 2014, you noticed that new questions were added and included the ability to “opt-out” in case programs had not compiled the information requested. In 2015, all programs are expected to collect and provide the new data over the course of this year (2014) and be prepared to complete the 2015 Annual Report by the February, 2016 deadline. The cohort tracking instrument utilized this year, will be mandatory for 2015. Additionally you will be asked to provide a copy of your program assessment plans.

Appendix J will be updated to account for exceptions to NBE pass rate data in the wake of the policy change regarding the NBE requirement for graduation. Also, the timeframe in which NBE scores are evaluated has been reduced from a 24-month to a 12-month period.

The Committee on Accreditation listened to concerns expressed about the required accreditation statements. The ABFSE office will send each school an updated accreditation statement following this meeting. The new statements will provide more clarity and should be incorporated into published materials and websites as soon as possible.

The COA expects the self study to be a “document of evidence.” To the greatest extent possible the self study should present information to verify compliance with the Standards.

### **Distance Learning Update – Robert C. Smith III, Executive Director**

If ABFSE was to assess the interest in funeral service education, based solely upon the calls received by the ABFSE office, it would appear that the only thing potential students are interested in is distance education. Callers apparently find the ABFSE via our website and the website makes it easy for potential students to find a program in the state of their choice. However, most callers about distance learning must find a program that is ‘out of state.’ These appear to be the questions the ABFSE office receives in spite of the listing of Distance Learning programs on the website.

It is obvious that students planning to enroll in funeral service education in their own state have already found out where the programs are. The students who are not sure of where they want to go, often find their way to the ABFSE website where with the aid of the “blue map” they can “click” and go to their state to quickly find the local programs. This likely minimizes the calls relating to schools in general.

Additional Distance Learning information gleaned from the 2012 - 2013 IPEDS reports indicates: (this is generic data, not funeral service specific)

- 25.8% of all students in the United States took some on-line courses.
- 12.5% of those students took those courses exclusively on-line and 13.3% reported taking some on-line courses.

From our 2015 ABFSE reports, we know:

- 20% of our graduates are from programs that offer Distance Learning for 50% or more of the program, representing a slight increase over last year's 16%.
- 11% of our programs report that they offer 50% or more of their instruction as Distance Learning.
- At those programs 58% of graduates participated in Distance Learning, even though the program may or may not offer traditional education.
- Two ABFSE programs offer Distance Learning as their only method of delivery.
- 21 other programs offer some Distance Learning as part of their curriculum, which may or may not be General Education.

Some believe there is a disconnect between what funeral service education is and what people think it should be. This is one of the reasons the “Learning From Our Critics” session was added to this year's agenda. As a whole, we need to determine how we can best educate the next generation of funeral service practitioners. Our graduates need life skills that are transferrable to any job market, not just funeral service. Funeral Directors expect that when our students graduate they will have the basic embalming skills, but may lack the necessary social, person-to-person, people skills.

Internship is another area of concern. Our students have to graduate with the basics of funeral service. Realizing that education is a lifelong process, we can never teach our future funeral service practitioners everything they need to know in the relatively short time they are in a program. Many believe that our graduates should be able to “hit the ground running” and do everything a funeral director is supposed to do. Every good employer is going to have some kind of a training program for new hires, to get them ready for the company culture. This is what an internship program, in all states, is really about. When an employee changes jobs and goes to work for a new company, even the most experienced practitioner has to learn what is expected in the new workplace. Some employers lose sight of the fact that they need to offer this preparation to their interns. The reality is that our funeral service graduates have a baseline education but they're not fully experienced; this is what an internship is all about. Part of our task in funeral service education is to be able to educate the students *and* the practitioners.

The veteran members of the ABFSE will recognize the new look to the 2015 Annual

Conference. This was initiated by the ABFSE officers.

The executive director issued a challenge to take one more step in teaching and to emphasize professional vocabulary and recommended that one of the professional development sessions next year in Houston focus on vocabulary. As faculty, compile a list of the terminology, the vocabulary, that when used leads to a professional image and emphasize these terms to the students. As educators, we hold the key to professional education.

A MOTION to accept the Executive Director's comments into the minutes.

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

### **President's Comments – Eugene Ogradnik, Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science**

Mr. Ogradnik recognized some of the people who contributed greatly to the success of this Annual Conference:

- The exhibitors. This has been a ground-breaking event and we look forward to next year.
- First-timers.
- Professional Associations: NFDA, NFD&MA and ICCFA
- Robb Smith, ABFSE Executive Director is doing an outstanding job in moving the ABFSE forward in these changing times.

The remarks President Ogradnik made last year, paralleled very closely to the Strategic Plan. In reviewing the points of the Strategic Plan, it was obvious that a year ago, the ABFSE was invisible. It is still invisible but not as much as a year ago. Reach out to your respective state associations, regional and local association and make a presentation to those funeral directors in the community and tell them what you, as a funeral service educator do.

President Ogradnik pointed out that in the last 37 years of ABFSE meetings that he has attended, until this year, attendees worked tirelessly for 15 hours a day doing the "business" of the American Board – curriculum, accreditation, scholarship, etc. We went home exhausted but never excited. We had unparalleled dedication to funeral service education but were criticized, and are still criticized today by our peers and professionals. One year later, we made a significant change and thank the dedicated group of officers who enabled this change with more changes ahead for next year.

Next year the goal is to have media attention for this event.

Through electronic communications we have expanded the time available for professional development, from half a day to a day and a half of professional development. Work was done in advance, making this meeting so much better and the efforts are greatly appreciated.

We are graced with new program directors, game-changers, young people with energy.

One of the most difficult of our challenges remains in our Strategic Plan, especially with

respect to Governance. This meeting included a very productive meeting on Governance which we can take to the next level to clarify the governance of the ABFSE. Attendees hopefully will return home, excited about this meeting, because there was the opportunity to network and become enlightened.

A MOTION to accept the President's comments into the minutes.

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

### **Financial Report – Jzyk Ennis; Secretary/Treasurer and Robert C. Smith, Executive Director**

Mr. Ennis reported that the ABFSE financials were audited last year with no substantial findings. We are financially healthy. At the end of 2014 we had a net profit of \$9,724 and our current cash assets are \$546,873. The Executive Committee and the Executive Director have done an excellent job in keeping the organization moving forward.

The Executive Committee met April 16<sup>th</sup> and approved the budget for 2016, which is in line with the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan requires that the budget cover the fiduciary responsibilities. In doing so, some will be affected by changes:

- Exhibitors: Starting in 2016, there will be a charge for the tabletop (2015 was gratis with voluntary contributions accepted) based on what other state organizations charge and what would be fair. In 2016, the fee will be \$300 per tabletop for exhibitors.

It is the membership's responsibility to provide the foot-traffic for these exhibitors.

- Registration: In 2016, registration for the annual meeting will include two guests for \$295. For the third person (or more) from each institution, there will be a \$150 registration fee.

The registration fees also apply to programs in Candidacy.

There is an exemption for our allied, professional members, as long as their representatives are attending committee meetings. There will also be an exemption for the "host" college or program. Their students work our registration booths so staff can attend necessary committee meetings.

- Going forward, the Executive Committee has been told that it is easier for the program to justify "accreditation fees" rather than "registration fees." Therefore, in our Strategic Plan, we will be evaluating what our needs are financially to provide these meetings and professional educational opportunities. It is possible the COA will be petitioned to increase the accreditation fee to offset the cost of providing these additional opportunities.

The Executive Director presented some additional financial information:

- Exhibitors were asked for a “voluntary” contribution towards the operating expenses and their response is very much appreciated. The Annual Awards Luncheon is sponsored in part via the generosity of CANA.
- Adjustments were made to our banking relationships; funds were moved from non-interest bearing accounts to interest-bearing accounts or to accounts with better interest rates. In some cases, we have improved the interest rate 50 – 800% such as going from 0.015% to 1.30%.
- In 2014 there was a change in auditing firms, saving over \$1400 in auditing costs compared to 2013. Nothing was lost in the quality of the audit however, two things were noted:
  1. Due to the policies initiated by the Executive Committee, there were no “dings” regarding separation of duties within the office.

When a check is required, the Executive Assistant inputs the information into our accounting system. That information is then forwarded to the Finance Committee. At least two of the officers must approve the expenditure before the Executive Director can print and sign the check.

2. Through the audit and the income tax return, it was realized that the ABFSE does not have a Document Retention and Destruction Policy. This is one of the key items on the agenda for the October meetings.

A MOTION to accept the Financial Report into the minutes.

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

**Past President’s Report and ABFSE Representative to the ICFSEB: Francisco Solis, San Antonio College**

Mr. Solis appreciates the work of the Executive Committee, the Executive Director and the membership in moving forward with the Strategic Plan and addressing the weaknesses identified through the initial analysis.

Mr. Solis challenged the Executive officers, and the membership as well, to respond to the analysis provided by our own annual reports. When we start to hear about drops in students, what are we doing in response? Although the Latino population is growing, the number of Latino students is dropping. The industry has asked us to respond to the declining number of male students and graduates, what are we doing to respond? We have a large amount of data provided to us; we need to start responding to it as our industry is asking us to do.

A MOTION to accept the report of the Immediate Past President into the minutes.

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

**Committee Reports and Greetings**

**Scholarship Committee – Frank Walton, Tidewater Community College**

The scholarship committee convened on Wednesday, April 15, 2015, at 1:10 pm.

Members present included:

Martha Thayer- Arapahoe Community College

Alexander Wynn - NFDMA

Robert Moore – NFDA

Robert Dean – Florida State College at Jacksonville

Frank Walton – Tidewater Community College

The committee reviewed 54 applications, and elected to award scholarship funds to the top 4 applicants, totaling \$5,500.00. Scholarship were presented to students enrolled at the following programs:

<u>School</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Provider</u>
Delgado	1,500	Clark Vault
CCMS	1,500	Dodge/AAMI
Worsham	1,500	NFDA Heritage/Batesville
Wayne St	1,000	ASD

Recommendations:

- Recognition of Robert Smith Executive Director for obtaining new sources of scholarship funds
- Recognition of Sally Pike for streamlining the application process and her tireless work to scan all documents for ease of access by committee members.

As outgoing chairman of the Scholarship Committee, Mr. Walton thanked those who encouraged him to become involved with the Scholarship Committee and supported him as a member of the committee. Robert Dean of Florida State College was elected Chair of the Scholarship Committee.

### **Curriculum Study – Stephanie Kann, Worsham College**

In recognition of the hard work done by the Curriculum Study Committee, Mrs. Kann recognized all committee members:

- Ken Cahall, NFDA Representative
- Carol Williams, NFDMA
- Wayne Cavender, Dallas Institute of Funeral Service
- Donna Collard, John A. Gupton College
- Mark Evely, Wayne State University
- John Fritch, University of Central Oklahoma
- Glenn Bower, Cypress College
- Damon de la Cruz, American River College
- Bill Harvey, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
- Paul Warren, Lincoln College

Mrs. Kann is rotating off the committee; Wayne Cavender was elected Chairman.

San Antonio College will host the Hilgenfeld Family Curriculum Workshop which will be held May 29-30, 2015. The workshop will again be sponsored by the Hilgenfeld Foundation; their support is greatly appreciated. The Funeral Directing and Embalming Outlines will be reviewed this summer. San Antonio College has hosted the curriculum workshop for the past four years; 2015 will be their final year as host. Mrs. Kann expressed appreciation to Frank Solis for San Antonio's support and hospitality. The 2016 workshop will be hosted by Tidewater Community College, Virginia Beach, VA.

The following will be participating in the 2015 Hilgenfeld Summer Curriculum Workshop:

**Funeral Directing**

Gary Brown  
Lauren Budrow  
Ken Cahall  
Chris Cano  
Mark Evely  
Jolena Grande  
Brian Mullins  
Benjamin Schmidt

**Embalming**

Jamye Cameron  
Travis Carrico  
Wayne Cavender  
Donna Collard  
Robert Dean  
Damon de la Cruz  
David Hess  
Lori Hopper  
Jody LaCourt  
Barry Lease  
Elise Surucu  
Martha Thayer

The Committee decided that for this summer's workshop we would appoint a chair and co-chair for Funeral Directing and Embalming. The Chair would be responsible for the content and the Co-Chair would be responsible for editing and formatting. For the Funeral Directing Outline the Chair will be Mark Evely and the Co-Chair John Fritch. For the Embalming Outline the Chair will be Wayne Cavender and the Co-Chair will be Donna Collard.

Wayne Cavender was elected Chair of the Committee; John Fritch be elected Vice-Chair.

President Ogrodnik expressed appreciation to Mrs. Kann for her six years of service on the Curriculum Committee.

**Committee on Accreditation – Steve Spann, John A. Gupton College**



Dalene Paull and representatives of the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards were invited to, and participated in, the NBE Liaison Committee meeting. Discussions included:

- Due to changes in NBE score reporting policy by the ICFSEB in July 2014, it is no longer possible to determine to what extent the population of distance learning students were passing the NBE on their first attempt in relation to the population of traditional “in class” students, as required in ABFSE Standard 11.4.3.

As a result of that discussion, the following motion was made:

“That, as part of the process for registering to take the NBE, The Conference create and include conspicuously placed language in the NBE application materials that explains: a) Candidates have the option of releasing their NBE scores to the funeral service education program from which they graduated, and b) Funeral service education programs use NBE score data to help evaluate their programs and improve student learning outcomes.”

The motion passed unanimously and will be forwarded to the College and University Council for its consideration.

- In addition to reporting pass/fail status to schools, members of the Committee asked if it would be possible to once again receive individual student scores on the NBE. The Committee noted that having individual NBE score results, rather than indication of only aggregate pass/fail rate data, is helpful in determining program strengths and weaknesses because each NBE item is referenced to the ABFSE curriculum outlines and textbooks and The Conference’s Task Analysis.

Following discussion on this subject, the following motion:

“That a) within 90 days of a candidate having taken the NBE, and b) with the candidate’s permission, The Conference once again release to ABFSE-accredited funeral service education programs, free of charge, individual candidate NBE performance data, to be presented in a format that is either similar, or identical, to that which was discontinued by the Conference in July, 2014.”

The motion passed unanimously and will be forwarded to the College and University Council for its consideration.

Copies of the Motions were available to be voted upon later in the meeting.

### **Program Committee – Dr. William Thompson, Bishop State Community College**

The Program Committee met with six members and two guests participating.

William Thompson was voted Chair. Additionally, Glenn Bower and Dedrick Gantt were voted Co-Vice Chairs for 2015. The addition of co-chairs will help to create continuity in the committee when Mr. Thompson and other members of the committee complete their terms of service in 2016.

A registration form was passed to those indicating interest in earning continuing education credit.

Open agenda discussion included topics of interest to the members and guests. Among these were Guest Speaker Agreement Form and transitioning leadership within the committee. Discussion related to past and future programs was held.

Mr. Thompson recognized members of the committee: Robby Bates, Glenn Bower, Dedrick Gantt, Rhonda Keyes Pleasants, and Elois Wyche Saucer.

Formulating some of the changes to the Annual Conference, has taken teamwork. This teamwork has been focused on the ABFSE strategic plan and the role of the Program Committee has been to fulfill a segment of that strategic plan. Mr. Thompson recognized the work done by the ABFSE office in getting information to and from the Program Committee and the leadership of President Ogrodnik for his contributions to the Program Committee. There are several new and valuable sessions scheduled for the 2015 Annual Conference. Feedback from the membership is welcomed and will help the Program Committee continue to make significant changes and improvements to the ABFSE Annual Conference.

An electronic survey will be distributed as soon as possible following this meeting. If more than the Program Directors are attending this conference, it is hoped that the program directors will ask those attendees to also complete the survey. Participation is greatly appreciated.

### **College and University Council –Michael LuBrant, University of Minnesota**

The College and University Council met and discussed several topics. One of the more significant being whether or not there should be a requirement for students to actively participate in funerals, memorial services and ceremonies to graduate? The CUC hopes to continue this discussion through a dialogue with the COA.

The Committee on Accreditation was invited to participate in a Question & Answer session. Several topics were addressed. Overall, this was a very positive move forward.

In an effort to hold CUC meetings twice a year, a teleconference will be held prior to the October meeting. An email will be distributed, soliciting agenda items and various concerns from the membership to be discussed during that teleconference. Information gathered will be passed along to the Committee on Accreditation for discussion at their October meeting.

### **Constitution and By-Laws Committee – Octavia Dickerson, East Mississippi Community College**

The Constitution and By-Laws Committee met on Wednesday, April 16<sup>th</sup> with four members and one guest present.

Mr. DeHart announced that he is leaving education; Mr. Solis was congratulated for his new appointment at San Antonio College.

The Notice of Motion to be considered by the membership was reviewed with no changes

necessary. There were no other issues to be addressed.

Two new members will be appointed to the committee, due to the resignation of Jonathan DeHart and the completed term of Mrs. Dickerson. Francisco Solis was elected Chairman of the committee.

### **National Funeral Directors Association – Robert Moore, President**

Mr. Moore expressed appreciation to Robb Smith as the Executive Director of the ABFSE and the number of NFDA representatives attending this conference, confirming NFDA's commitment to the ABFSE. Mr. Moore especially recognized the work of Colleen Murphy Klein for her efforts to coordinate activities with the ABFSE, as well as the work she is doing to edit the Curriculum Outlines.

The annual Advocacy Summit recently concluded in Washington DC with over 200 attendees to meet with our legislators. For the first time, NFDA was able to offer continuing education credits for the practitioners attending.

Also completed in March was the 5<sup>th</sup> "Meet the Mentors" conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Fifty NFDA-members who are licensed funeral professionals under the age of 40 were invited, to learn from and talk with some of the profession's leading funeral directors.

Another successful Cremation Symposium was concluded in Las Vegas. CANA co-sponsored this event.

A new NFDA Business Conference will be launched in May. This event is created especially for small to mid-size funeral homes, to provide business owners with the knowledge and tools needed to take the guesswork out of finances to ensure growth, profitability and financial strength.

The NFDA continues to work on cremation resources. The Certified Crematory Operator Program has cleared nearly 1,000 registrants since this program began in 2013 which have included 768 practitioners and 180 students. Seminars have been held at 10 accredited schools; 19 are scheduled for the coming year. A number of schools have adopted NFDA's book, *Cremation Standards For Funeral Service Professionals* for use in the classroom. A revision of this publication will be released later this year; desk copies are available. An e-book is planned in the future.

The NFDA Cremation and Burial Statistics Report is being updated for 2015.

Upcoming events include the Professional Women's Conference to be held later this month (April) and the Asia Funeral and Cemetery Expo & Conference in May. This year NFDA is working on studies which include Member Compensation and GPL surveys. In 2016, a follow-up to the Employer Expectation survey and Student Employment Expectation survey can be expected.

NFDA continues to support FAMIC's, "Have the Talk of a Lifetime" along with other professional organizations. FAMIC is getting ready to launch this message nationally in 2016.

Effective immediately, membership fees for accredited schools have been reduced 50% for 2015 to \$192 - all licensed educators within the school become members and students can become members digitally, with teacher verification. Electronic membership gives the students electronic access to NFDA publications. If a *hard copy* of the magazine is preferred, the membership cost is \$35.

The 2015 NFDA International Convention & Expo will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana in October. All program directors will receive a letter offering free registration; hopefully many will be able to attend the Expo.

NFDA has accepted the challenge of spreading the message of the ABFSE by setting aside space in *The Director* magazine for ABFSE activities and information. Funeral Service education remains an important part of the NFDA's strategic plan. NFDA looks forward to continued strong working relationships with the American Board of Funeral Service Education and the other professional members.

### **National Funeral Directors & Morticians Association – Jamye Jeter Cameron, President**

NFD&MA was founded primarily on the premise of supporting educational efforts and insuring that the organization provides educational opportunities to all funeral service practitioners. NFD&MA is committed to the continued support of the American Board of Funeral Service Education because they believe that education is essential to the survival of this profession. NFD&MA is thankful for what educators do, publically and privately, to insure and secure the future of funeral service.

Ms. Cameron expressed appreciation to NFD&MA volunteers and representatives who participate in ABFSE meetings and functions: Dr. Carol Williams, Billie Watson-Hughes, Elois Saucer, and Ernest Adams.

NFD&MA constantly and continually supports the national initiative to help curtail violence in the communities.

NFD&MA recently completed their Advocacy Summit in Washington DC. NFD&MA works closely with NFDA to insure that both organizations to provide a unified voice to legislators.

NFD&MA continues to support FAMIC for the important part that funeral service plays in having "The Talk of a Lifetime."

NFD&MA invited attendees to attend their National Convention, "Striving for Excellence with A New Beginning" will be held in August 1 – 6, 2015 in St. Louis, Missouri.

The House of Representatives meeting will be held April 18 – 21 in Little Rock, Arkansas. The South Africa Funeral Directors Association meeting will be held May 14 – 21, 2015; a delegation of 19 people plan to attend this meeting.

The "Forty and Under" group had an outstanding and exciting conference in Atlanta in February.

NFD&MA continues to offer free membership to funeral service students. This is not contingent upon their school being members of NFD&MA, however schools are encouraged to become members.

NFD&MA has been able to partner with CANA to offer their first Cremation Certification Program.

The NFD&MA Education Commission offers timely information, which can be implemented immediately. Appreciation was expressed to Rhonda Keyes Pleasants, Education Commissioner, for her efforts in bringing outstanding educational opportunities to the organization.

Distribution of NFD&MA's *Scope* magazine has been set up for all ABFSE schools. Schools not receiving the publication are urged to contact the NFD&MA office immediately.

NFD&MA is proud and honored to have Venus Riley Smith appointed as Chairperson of the Committee on Accreditation.

The organization also thanks ABFSE for the opportunity for NFD&MA to participate in the implementation of what is being taught in our mortuary schools.

### **International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association – Robert C. Smith III**

Mark Krause has resigned his position as ICCFA representative to ABFSE. During this transition period, there has been a lack of representation by ICCFA. As a result, the Executive Director reached out to the ICCFA to clarify the relationship between the ICCFA and the ABFSE. Unfortunately, due to the timing of the ICCFA meeting immediately preceding this meeting, current ICCFA representative on the COA, Gwen Mooney, was unable to attend this meeting.

Mr. Smith was able to attend the ICCFA Board meeting during their annual convention. ICCFA is interested to participate in our activities but a formal report from ICCFA was not available for presentation.

Mr. Smith reminded attendees of the ICCFA University and other education opportunities. Membership in ICCFA is not required.

ICCFA was very pleased to have 150 students attend their annual convention, including 90 students and the entire staff, from San Antonio College.

At their Advocacy Summit, ICCFA representatives visited with the FTC staff relative to the Funeral Rule.

ICCFA representatives sensed animosity from the FTC due to the reported 25% non-compliance with the Funeral Rule after 30 years. Although we cannot control what happens in the funeral homes, but it is our responsibility to present the correct perspective of the regulations.

A MOTION to accept all committee reports into the minutes was presented.

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

## **Agenda Revision:**

Due to time constraints, Jolena Grande's presentation was postponed and will be given at the Annual Awards Luncheon, immediately following the Annual Meeting.

President Ogrodnik deferred Unfinished Business.

## **New Business**

**NOTION OF MOTION** presented by Octavia Dickerson for the Constitution and By-Laws Committee:

### **Background:**

Certain language the ABFSE Constitution and By-Laws has been revised to reflect an evolving membership base. However, the revised membership base is now in the past and is described in the Brief History of the ABFSE section of the Accreditation and Policy Manual, Chapter I. The language change proposed in this Motion does not materially alter the Constitution. The proposed language change is intended to clarify the acceptance of ABFSE recognition.

Accordingly, the following changes are recommended:

### **MOVED:**

#### **ABFSE Constitution, Chapter II, Article II, Page 2-1**

##### **Current:**

The American Board of Funeral Service Education shall accredit the institutions or programs of funeral service education in accordance with regulations and procedures as set forth in its Manual of Criteria and Procedures for Accreditation and Policy [Manual]. Such accreditation shall be recognized by the National Funeral Directors Association, [with changes subsequently approved, the National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association was added effective 2002 and the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA) was added in 2009] the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards, and the accredited institutions.

##### **New language:** ARTICLE II - OBJECT

The American Board of Funeral Service Education shall accredit the institutions or programs of funeral service education in accordance with regulations and procedures as set forth in its Accreditation and Policy Manual. Such accreditation shall be recognized by the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA), the National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association (NFDMA), the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA), the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards (ICFSEB) and the accredited institutions.

Motion to accept: David Penepent (SUNY); second Jason Altieri (Commonwealth)

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

In the interest of time, President Ogrodnik requested for a collective **NOTICE OF MOTION** presented by the ABFSE Curriculum Study Committee for the revisions as shown and any subsequent technical corrections, be approved for use in the classroom by the ABFSE for the following outlines:

- Anatomy
- Cremation
- History of Funeral Service
- Pathology
- Sociology

The Motion was made by Jason Altieri (Commonwealth Institute) and seconded by Thomas Taggart (Mesa Community College)

VOTE: Passed unanimously

**NOTICE OF MOTION** presented by College and University Council on behalf of the National Board Liaison Committee, without advance notice, prior to the Annual Meeting (copies were distributed at the meeting):

**Background:**

In July, 2014, the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards (The Conference) changed its policy with respect to the reporting of individual candidates' scores on the National Board Examination (NBE) to the ABFSE-accredited program from which the candidate graduated. Specifically, schools are no longer sent individual pass-rate information and related performance statistics, as was the case prior to July, 2015. This change in policy has caused difficulty for some programs, especially those which offer both on-line and in-class learning options.

At the meeting of the ABFSE's National Board Examination Liaison Committee held on Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, the following two motions were unanimously passed by Committee members:

**MOVED:**

The American Board of Funeral Service Education requests the following from The Conference:

1. That, as part of the process for registering to take the NBE, The Conference create and include conspicuously placed language in the NBE application materials that explains:
  - a. Candidates have the option of releasing their NBE scores to the funeral service education program from which they graduated, and
  - b. Funeral service education programs use NBE score data to help evaluate their programs and improve student learning outcomes.

2. That a) within 90 days of a candidate having taken the NBE, and b) with the candidate's permission, The Conference once again release to ABFSE-accredited funeral service education programs, free of charge, individual candidate NBE performance data, to be presented in a format that is either similar, or identical, to that which was discontinued by the Conference in July, 2014.

Motion to accept: Matt Buel (Arkansas State University); second Billie Watson-Hughes (NFD&MA)

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

Adjourned 12:46 pm.

Next Meeting  
Houston, Texas  
April 15, 2016