

May 10, 2016

Dear Dr. Naudé:

I write with regard to your appeal of the Annual Meeting Program Committee's decision to renew Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew as a seminar. Thank you for providing me with a document laying out your concerns ("LBH Appeal" sent April 14, 2016) and for documentation of the history of correspondence about the unit's renewal. I have received similar materials from the Annual Meeting Program Committee and my staff member Charlie Haws, who coordinates much of the correspondence between units and the committee and the committee's own work. I write to convey my decision regarding the unit's appeal.

That decision involves two courses of action. The first course is to continue as the committee's letter of March 2 indicated—as a seminar through at least 2018, with a review of its status for 2019-2021. The second course involves the following.

1. The unit has the status of section for the 2016 Annual Meeting. The committee regrets that the unit's review took longer than usual but agreed with your point that members who submitted proposals during the call for papers period would have understood the unit to be a section. I understand that this has already been communicated to you in prior correspondence.
2. Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew will transition to a seminar for the 2017 and 2018 Annual Meetings, as the committee decided and conveyed in its letter from March 2, 2016. The transition was mentioned already in the committee's letter from December 21, 2015 and conveys the committee's view that the unit fits the model of a seminar more closely than a section.
  - a. Your letter of April 14, 2016 states that for linguistics to be a seminar is to be "denigrated." I don't believe this to be the case. *Seminars have no limitations different than sections related to collaboration, number of sessions, or participants.* Seminars may typically distribute presentations for advance reading, but this hardly prevents collaboration with a unit that does not typically do so.
  - b. You have objected that the linguistics unit is markedly different from the philology unit, and the committee has repeatedly expressed its respect for your view. The committee has, however, also maintained that integrating the two units best serves the interests of scholarship in the context of the Annual Meeting. The committee has been consistent in its efforts to cultivate more collaboration among related units, which is a goal that Council and I fully support.
3. A clear response was not given about what collaboration might look like, and for this the committee apologizes. It also agrees that to wait until after the Annual Meeting to explain how collaboration might work is not feasible. You proposed the following: LBH and PHS will plan one joint thematic session each year for 2017 and 2018. After the 2018 meeting, LBH and PHS will jointly re-evaluate

whether there is interest in such a joint session and whether new knowledge is created as a result of the joint session. The committee appreciates your willingness to explore such collaboration and agrees that organizing one joint session in 2017 and 2018 is a manageable and productive effort of collaboration.

4. To document the outcomes of this collaboration, the linguistics and philology units should submit joint letters—that is, one co-authored letter, not separate letters from each unit—to the committee via Charlie Haws, who will share the letters with me, by December 1 in each of the next three years (2016, 2017, and 2018). The 2016 letter should, of course, focus more on the plan for collaboration, while the 2017 and 2018 letters should indicate the outcomes of collaboration. And we would encourage the units to meet in person at the 2016 Annual Meeting to finalize such plans before submitting the first letter.
5. The committee will review these letters in the context of the unit's type upon submission of the December 1, 2018 letter. It will respond to the letters prior to that if necessary. The committee will then consider whether the linguistics unit might return to the type of section for the remainder of its term (2019-2021). We recognize that the call for papers is typically due in mid-December, and it will do everything necessary to adjudicate this issue prior to that deadline.
6. Review will be based on:
  - a. the extent to which the unit has demonstrated collaboration (as I understand it, linguistics had only two joint sessions from 2004 through 2014 but has had several in the past two years, which the committee would like to see continue),
  - b. the representation of sessions filled via an open call for papers (at least one session each year), and
  - c. the unit's plan for continuing collaboration (with philology and other units) and broad participation for the remainder of its term.

I hope you find the proposal above to be a satisfactory compromise. The linguistics and philology units will have opportunities to debate the contentions in your past letters related to the relation between the disciplines, their methodologies, and the ways in which they contribute to biblical scholarship. Your subsequent letters to the committee (#4 above)—jointly authored with the chairs of philology—will lay out these relations.

Sincerely,



John F. Kutsko