

**AIC Member Business Meeting  
Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, Connecticut  
17 May 2019**

*Approved by the AIC Board of Directors on 9 August 2019*

Margaret Holben Ellis, AIC President called the meeting to order at 7:39 a.m.

**Secretary's Report**

AIC Secretary Sue Murphy moved to approve the 2018 Member Business Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Paul Himmelstein. There was no discussion, and the motion was passed unanimously by the members in attendance.

**Nominating Committee Report**

Beverly Perkins, Nominating Committee Chair, thanked all of the board members for their service on behalf of the Nominating Committee. Margaret Holben Ellis will be serving a second term as President, as will Suzanne Davis, Vice President, and Brenda Bernier, Director of Communications.

Sarah Stauderman will be joining the nominating committee and Fran Ritchie will be rotating on as chair. Jason Church was thanked for his willingness to serve on the nominating committee. Incoming chair Fran Ritchie urged members to consider participating in leadership, becoming a Fellow and reading AIC News for the call to participate in board leadership.

**Treasurer's Report**

Sarah Barack thanked AIC and FAIC Finance Director Linda Budhinata for her support in creating the reports. The report provided an overview of revenues, expenses, and net assets at the close of 2018 as well as the budgets for 2019.

Barack began by showing the FY2018 budget in comparison to 2018 actual finances. AIC had budgeted for a \$23,533 deficit and ended 2018 with an actual deficit of \$123,274. The deficit is both due to specialty group reserves spending and also losses due to the market downturn in investments that occurred at the end of 2018. In FY2019, AIC has budgeted for \$1,697,054 in income and \$1,607,710 in expenses. The anticipated net loss in the 2019 budget is due to continued spending of specialty group reserves, more conservative investment performance, and increased spending on transportation due to the meeting location. Membership dues and the annual meeting continue to be primary drivers of AIC income, with the highest expenses in membership and the annual meeting.

In comparison with prior years, AIC total net assets have been most strongly impacted by market position but also show the impact of assets that were being held in reserve. Barack noted that the decrease in net assets actually demonstrated positive spending on membership initiatives.

Barack then discussed FAIC finances and reminded members about generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). According to GAAP, all grant income is booked in the year the grant is received, even if spending occurs over multiple years. The FY2018 budget projected a net income of \$10,647, when the projected previously booked grant income of

\$579,005 was taken into account. The actual net loss for 2018 was \$978,286, of which \$574,612 was offset by previously booked grant income. This resulted in a loss of \$403,675 after grant income, due primarily to poor market performance. In FY2019, there is an anticipated net loss of \$550,337, of which \$550,646 will be covered by previous booked grants, resulting in a net profit of \$310. The Collections Assessment for Preservation (CAP) program and professional development are major expenses for FAIC, with grants and investments providing the most income.

### **2020 Annual Meeting**

Suzanne Davis, AIC Vice President, thanked all responsible for organizing the 2019 annual meeting, including speakers, program chairs, program committees, participants, AIC Meetings & Advocacy Director Ruth Seyler, and AIC and FAIC staff. The 2020 Annual Meeting will take place in Salt Lake City from May 19 through 23, in the City Creek neighborhood of downtown Salt Lake. The majority of conference events will take place at the Salt Palace Convention Center, with the City Creek Marriott serving as the conference hotel. The hotel is across the street from the convention center and a 15-minute trip from the airport on light rail. The opening reception will take place at the Natural History Museum of Utah.

The theme for the meeting is “Conservation: Reactive and Proactive.” Davis encouraged members to not only submit abstracts for talks, but also proposals for alternative program structures and focused discussions, and to reach out to her regarding ideas. Members also expressed their support for the TED Talk-style presentations that had been utilized in the opening general session.

### **State of the Organization**

AIC & FAIC Executive Director Eryl Wentworth began by thanking all who have made AIC and FAIC’s progress possible. She spoke about the Comprehensive Organizational Health Initiative (COHI) grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which sparked transformation and growth in both organizations. Wentworth thanked both boards, staff, consultants, and volunteer leaders for their input and encouraged members to read the FAQ document about the COHI grant. COHI includes many components related to strengthening and creating programs and building staff capacity. She noted that clear and concise messaging was needed for both the FAIC capital campaign and the Friends of Conservation program to help introduce us to new audiences. Wentworth encouraged members to explore and promote the Friends of Conservation program. The FAIC capital campaign will be a 5-year project, assisted by consultants from Graham-Pelton, who specialize in fundraising consulting for non-profits, and are offering expertise and hands-on support. She noted that the campaign is still in its “quiet phase” until 2021, but that, thanks to the campaign committee, there is already strong support for the campaign.

Wentworth added that along with the new initiatives, AIC and FAIC have maintained and grown ongoing programmatic activity. Both AIC and FAIC boards and staff created new strategic plans with the assistance of a facilitator, and the plans can be found on the website. The online community was launched over a year ago, facilitating member dialogues and programs and supporting event communications for FAIC. The platform also allows for the creation of online libraries to help consolidate online resources, and a new learning management system, centralizing professional development opportunities.

AIC and FAIC communications are also expanding, including the launch of a new Instagram account. The *Journal for the American Institute for Conservation* (JAIC) has increased their article submission rate and reduced the time frame for the editorial

process. Wentworth noted the recent special issue on imaging and an upcoming special issue on salted paper prints, encouraging members to submit ideas for special issues of JAIC.

Wentworth thanked partners including the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the Department of the Interior (DOI), and the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) for their support of FAIC programs. The CAP program welcomed 79 new participants, who will also be invited to participate in the Connecting to Collections Care (C2C Care) Online community for support following their assessments. C2C Care continues to help small institutions provide well-informed care and serves as an important resource.

The Alliance for Response (AFR) network will expand to include Oklahoma City. FAIC will also create online and in-person training for heritage responders. The National Heritage Responders (NHR) were deployed to Puerto Rico and in the Midwest and continue to provide assistance in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. Wentworth also thanked National Heritage Responder Randy Silverman for helping to create public service announcements about saving cultural heritage during flooding events that were broadcast on the radio in affected areas. FAIC also presented a Risk Evaluation and Planning Program (REPP) workshop at the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM) conference and will continue building a relationship with that organization.

FAIC professional development programming continues to provide many excellent educational opportunities for conservation professionals, with ten workshops taking place at the meeting alone. Wentworth added that the meeting is enhanced by the attendance of international presenters, who are supported by funding from the Kress Foundation and Tru Vue, as well as the Getty Foundation, which makes the Latin American and Caribbean Scholars program possible.

Wentworth also noted that AIC and FAIC create and maintain an impressive amount of actively used online content—which is utilized both by members and those seeking trusted information on conservation and preservation—and thanked AIC e-Editor Rachael Arenstein for her continued guidance.

Wentworth emphasized the importance of our partnerships in outreach and advocacy. One example is our partnership with the National Humanities Alliance, which recently resulted in FAIC Emergency Programs Coordinator Jessica Unger giving testimony in front of the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee. Unger spoke about FAIC emergency response activities and the importance of funding for the NEH. Following testimony, the Subcommittee's proposed budget features a \$12.5 million increase to the NEH budget.

Margaret Holben Ellis continued to discuss the state of the organizations, inviting the AIC board members to describe their role.

- Vice President Suzanne Davis works on programming aspects of the annual meeting along with Ruth Seyler and encouraged members to contact her with all ideas, concerns, and proposed changes to the meeting. Davis also serves on the Audit Committee, looking at all aspects of business practice.
- Secretary Sue Murphy calls for votes and liaises with the four standing committees, Appeals, Nominating, Ethics & Standards, and Membership, including the Member Designations Working Group (MDWG). Murphy added that the MDWG is seeking

member input and to contact MDWG members to express your views. The MDWG will be completing their recommendations to the board prior to the 2020 May board meeting.

- Treasurer Sarah Barack reviews all budget and financial information, provides quarterly reports at the board meetings and helps increase awareness of AIC and FAIC business practices.
- Director, Education, Molly Gleeson works with the Equity and Inclusion Committee (EIC), Emerging Conservation Professionals Network (ECPN), and the Education and Training Committee (ETC), which also is involved in the FAIC scholarship, grants, and workshops programs. Gleeson asked members to reach out with any suggestions for future professional development programming.
- Director, Committees and Networks, Tom Braun works with the Bylaws, Awards, Emergency, Health & Safety, and Sustainability Committees, as well as the Collection Care Network (CCN) and the newly formed Contemporary Art Network (CAN!).
- Director, Communications, Brenda Bernier liaises with the Publications Committee, editors for JAIC, AIC News, and the eResources editor, communications staff, and provides guidance on the Wiki, Online Community, and STASH. Bernier noted the work of the Publications Committee task force, which recently created a Best Practices document for online library organization in the online community, and encouraged members to review the guidelines.
- Director, Specialty Groups, Sarah Melching serves as a liaison to the specialty groups and facilitates collaboration with other groups within AIC.

Ellis noted that there is an organizational chart available on the AIC website to help clarify board roles and responsibilities, but also welcomed members to reach out with any questions.

She announced that with 1,356 registrations for the meeting, the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting was the third largest meeting ever. Ellis thanked all attendees and all who made the extra effort to attend the business meeting.

Ellis described the role of AIC president as overseeing and mediating the diverse interests of the membership. She stated that while the COHI initiative was begun in 2015, the award was given in late 2017, with the implementation of the grant largely performed by staff over the previous year. Ellis noted the revitalized online presence, messaging, new communications platforms, and development of the Friends of Conservation program and campaign fund, which all culminated in the reveal of the new visual identity, led by Communications & Membership Director Bonnie Naugle, in February of 2019. Ellis acknowledged the strong response from membership, which led to the development of the COHI FAQ document and the decision to respond to all member postings, demonstrating the board's willingness to listen to and consider all member perspectives.

Ellis added that the board took these perspectives into account when deciding to commit to the new visual identity and move forward to focus on upcoming activities. She acknowledged that increased member communication will be essential during this time of change and that the board will seek to more clearly communicate future initiatives to membership. Ellis concluded by emphasizing the necessity of the FAIC campaign, giving FAIC greater ability to guarantee operational security to advance organizational goals.

## **Equity and Inclusion Committee Update**

Jennifer Hain Teper, Equity and Inclusion Committee (EIC) Chair, provided an update on the committee's activities, and began by thanking all of the committee members for their work. Since members were appointed in September of 2018, the EIC has led a second successful pre-session at the Annual Meeting and partnered with ECPN to create a webinar about gender equity in conservation. She also cited the EIC's involvement in providing pronoun preference ribbons to add to name badges and signage indicating gender flexible restrooms at the meeting, thanking Seyler and the Mohegan Sun for their support. The committee has sought additional ways to reach broad audiences in conservation, including submitting an abstract to the Institute of Conservation (ICON) conference in Belfast. The EIC also created the land acknowledgement text featured in the meeting materials and wrote an article for AIC News to contextualize the purpose of land acknowledgements and provide resources for creating acknowledgements.

The committee launched an online community for discussing topics in equity and inclusion that is open to everyone, not only AIC members. Teper encouraged members to join the community and to continue to participate in discussions online. She acknowledged recent efforts to solicit member ideas regarding renaming the "Angels Project" and added that the committee will make a recommendation to the board soon. The EIC is also seeking "success stories" about overcoming adversity to participate in the field, but has not seen wide member response to this topic.

Teper provided insights into potential future collaborations and activities, including: a proposed retreat for the AIC board, staff, and the EIC committee to discuss topics in equity and inclusion; further collaboration with the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Museum Alliance; creating a special issue of JAIC focused on equity and inclusion; working with the MDWG; and future annual meeting programming needs, including developing affinity groups for peers who may feel marginalized and materials to assist session moderators. Teper encouraged members to reach out to her and the committee with any ideas.

## **Membership Designations Working Group (MDWG) Update**

Nancy Pollak and Deborah Trupin, Co-chairs of the MDWG, spoke about the objectives of the group, chiefly, developing a peer-review system that is fair, accessible, and accountable. Pollak and Trupin reminded attendees that the MDWG has presented a draft proposal online and is seeking member comment. They also acknowledged the interviews, research, and discussions that had informed the draft proposal, including the 2018 survey of membership.

The MDWG met in February in Washington, DC, to begin the process of developing the proposal and has since formed three subgroups to help evaluate and revise the competencies documents for conservators and conservation technicians, chaired by Jessica Walthew, and for collection care professionals, chaired by Laura Hartz Stanton. One of the groups will also create a set of competencies for conservation scientists, chaired by Catherine Matsen.

In addition to soliciting comments on the first draft of the membership designation proposal throughout the summer, Pollak and Trupin led business meeting attendees in a discussion on three major topics addressed in the proposal.

The first topic was the idea of Professional Associate becoming Professional Member (PM) and having three categories of professional membership: Professional Member:

Conservation Practice, Professional Member: Conservation Science, and Professional Member: Preservation and Collection Care. Pollak and Trupin reminded attendees that a member could hold more than one designation. Feedback on this proposed change included:

- Having three different designations might lead to unnecessarily distinguishing between professionals and their roles, especially given changing roles throughout a career
- Creating a path for conservation technicians to be recognized with Professional Membership

Questions raised included:

- How would those who are primarily conservation administrators or directors select a membership designation?
- How does changing the designation speak to the overall goals of the organization and who is invited to become part of the organization?
- How would the new PM system compare to and be tied into existing member designations and/or certification efforts internationally?
- How would the differentiation between designations be perceived internally within the organization and among external stakeholders, including the public?

The second topic was adding continuing professional development (CPD) as a requirement for maintaining PM status. Feedback on this proposed change included:

- Architectural conservators spoke to the rigors of maintaining professional designations as an architect and potential issues of liability in having a designation with CPD
- CPD activities should extend beyond solely AIC and FAIC programming
- Organizing events could also be counted as a CPD activity, not only attending
- CPD activities could include business, leadership or other broader topics tied to career growth, not only conservation-focused activities

Questions raised included:

- Will enough types of CPD be available to membership at inclusive cost points, in ways that address the geographic diversity of the membership, and in a wide variety of specialties?
- How will toxic and competitive attitudes toward meeting CPD requirements be addressed?
- How will activities be vetted for inclusion on an accepted list of CPD opportunities?

The third topic was the proposed changes to the nature of and application process for Fellows. Professional Member would be a terminal professional designation that members would apply for and would require CPD. Fellow would be an honorary designation designed to recognize a member's achievements, dedication to the Code of Ethics, and service to AIC, and would be granted through a nomination process, which is inclusive of self-nomination. Feedback on this proposed change included:

- Concerns were raised that the proposal did not clearly outline how members in active practice need to maintain their Professional Membership and Fellow status separately, and that members could maintain their Fellow membership independent of their status as a PM if no longer practicing

- Specific emphasis on the Code of Ethics for Fellows was questioned as both PMs and Fellows should be supporting use of the Code of Ethics
- The perception of Fellow as “PA plus” was discussed, as well as concerns that the current Fellow application system was too difficult and time-consuming, given that Fellows have received PA status and submitted much of that information already
- Confusion due to the position term “Fellow” as a term applied to students and post graduates versus the AIC designation “Fellow” was discussed
- Concerns were raised about the perception of elitism due to the name “Society of Fellows” being used to refer to Fellows as a group

Questions raised included:

- What are the specific benefits to becoming a PM or Fellow, but also what are the responsibilities for service?
- How is Fellow recognized externally versus internally?

The MDWG members will use member feedback submitted online, via email, and at the business meeting, along with possible surveys and interviews, to inform changes to the draft proposal and will share a second draft later this summer. Following revision cycles, the final proposal will be submitted to the AIC board this winter. Following board approval, the membership designation proposal will be voted on by the membership. If approved, then any necessary bylaws changes will be made. Pollak and Trupin concluded by encouraging members not to wait for the new designations to pursue peer review and to continue to apply to become Professional Associates and Fellows.

### **Old Business**

Concerns were raised about a perceived lack of support for conservators in private practice and a request was made for more information about actions AIC had taken in the preceding year to help those in private practice. Melching spoke about work that had been done to improve the functionality and capabilities of the Find a Conservator search tool on the website, including requesting that members not use institutional email addresses if they chose to be listed in Find a Conservator. She added that the work of the MDWG will also help improve understanding of member designations and the value of working with a peer reviewed conservator. Ellis also noted that the website now has a greater emphasis on providing information to the general public, including on working with conservators. Davis suggested developing additional resources, particularly regarding hiring practices, for external stakeholders.

Clarification was requested on the intended goals of the Friends of Conservation program. FAIC Outreach Coordinator Katelin Lee spoke about the long-standing need to activate and educate those interested in or sympathetic to AIC and FAIC’s mission who are not conservation or preservation professionals. Friends introduced to basic preservation concepts and information about working with conservators are encouraged to advocate for conservation. Through their donation, they support FAIC programming and the program reduces the burden on AIC members to serve as a sole source of conservation knowledge among family, friends, and clients. An outreach kit is available to members and additional materials will be made available to help clarify and promote the program. Members were encouraged to share information about Friends of Conservation with their personal networks.

It was noted that the old URL, [www.conservation-us.org](http://www.conservation-us.org), redirects users to the new URL, [www.culturalheritage.org](http://www.culturalheritage.org). A concern was voiced about whether this was temporary, given

existing materials and work done to share the site with colleagues. Naugle confirmed that the redirect will work for many years and asked members to contact her about site issues, such as broken links.

A question was asked regarding the need to build capacity and what the organization was doing to become more sustainable, including seeking grants. Ellis noted the work of FAIC Institutional Advancement Director Eric Pourchot, who is primarily responsible for submitting grant applications on behalf of FAIC. She added that beyond financial capacity, it is necessary for both organizations to focus on improving public understanding of and appreciation for conservation and conservators and increasing diversity within the field. She encouraged members to read the COHI FAQ document for additional insights into the current initiatives for improving sustainability and capacity. Barack also noted the importance of unrestricted funding to support activities.

A request was made for AIC to explore issues of parental leave and the concerns of conservation professionals considering having children, including health risks associated with and to pregnancy in conservation practice. Gleeson suggested that both the EIC and Health and Safety Committee would be appropriate groups to facilitate this discussion and encouraged further discussion.

### **New Business**

There was discussion of the new visual identity, including concerns that the logo does not represent the organization adequately and regarding specific text on the website homepage. Ellis said that the text could be revisited. Members were encouraged to submit images of conservation for organizational use to help in representing the field. There was also support voiced for the new visual identity and thanks expressed for the work done by board and staff.

A request was made to engage further with media coverage of conservation work, including issuing corrections when terms are used incorrectly. It was noted that corrections are frequently issued by board and staff, however, the media outlets may not publish them. Members were encouraged to also be proactive in responding to media coverage of conservation.

There was a suggestion that online platforms be used to better inform membership of initiatives and improve parity for members who are not able to attend the Business Meeting, such as online quarterly town halls. Ellis noted board and staff communications through AIC News and added that the board will take the suggestion into consideration.

Ellis suggested that the AIC board create an updated policy regarding climate change, and she will work with the Sustainability Committee on this topic.

It was moved to adjourn the meeting by Paul Himmelstein and seconded by Priscilla Anderson. The meeting was adjourned at 9:58 a.m.