

AIC Member Business Meeting Minutes

A Virtual Meeting

Friday, May 14, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 12:02 pm by AIC President Margaret Holben Ellis. Ellis began with a land acknowledgement.

Secretary's Report

Jennifer McGlinchey Sexton, AIC Secretary, noted that the 2020 Member Business Meeting minutes were available on the Governance page on the AIC website and had been approved by the Board. With no questions or comments, she made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Ronel Namde. The membership voted to approve the minutes, with 137 affirming, 12 abstaining, and none opposed.

Nominating Committee Report

Penley Knipe, AIC Nominating Committee Chair, announced the outcome of the 2021 elections. The new AIC Board President is Suzanne Davis, and the new Vice President is Corina Rogge. The new Director, Committees and Networks is Samantha Springer. All three are serving a first term in their respective roles. Renée Stein was elected to serve a three-year term on the Nominating Committee. Knipe thanked all who voted and gave special thanks to those who ran, noting an unprecedented tie for the Vice President position, which had required a run-off election. She concluded by thanking outgoing officers Ellis and Director, Tom Braun, as well as acknowledging the service of Davis in her role as Vice President. Sarah Stauderman will serve as the next Nominating Committee chair, followed by Jessica Chloros, then Renée Stein.

Treasurer's Report

AIC and FAIC Treasurer Elmer Eusman began by thanking AIC and FAIC Executive Director Eryl Wentworth and Finance Director Linda Budhinata for their assistance in developing the Treasurer's Report. He assured members that despite uncertain times, we remain on sound financial footing, due to sound guidance from staff and successful Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan applications, all of which decreased the impacts of the pandemic. He noted that the pricing structure developed for the 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting did an excellent job balancing the loss in revenue compared to an in-person meeting and the decreased costs of a virtual meeting. Investments also performed well, which helped the finances of both organizations. He also noted that both organizations' financial statements are reviewed by an independent financial firm prior to fieldwork for the single or uniform audit being conducted by our contracted auditors. No deficiencies were reported in the 2020 audit.

Eusman acknowledged major variances from budgeted costs for 2020 and 2021, noting the impact of the pandemic on scheduled events and programming. Budgets are constructed in the fall of the preceding year, so the projected expenses and income did not align with activities in 2020. While a slight loss was projected, as we anticipated 35% less income in 2020, we found a larger decrease in expenses. This currently constitutes a \$108,000 net income; however, this figure does include investments and unrealized gains that are a snapshot in time.

Looking at the 2021 budget, the ability to make the decision to hold a virtual meeting earlier allowed for the meeting to be budgeted accordingly and are reflected in lower budgeted income and expenses. Eusman noted that membership income is relatively stable, with only a small decrease. He also showed that AIC's total net assets did increase in 2020. He noted that the \$830,000 figure includes approximately \$175,000 in Specialty Group reserves.

In reviewing FAIC's finances, members should hold GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) in mind. All grant income must be booked in the year the grant is received, but expenses occur throughout the span of the grant. For FAIC, whose income is primarily grant-based, this may present as significant deficits. However, when previously booked income is taken into account, 2020 ended with a net income of \$789,000, despite an anticipated deficit of \$120,000. This is in part due to program activities that were delayed or cancelled due to the pandemic, including workshops, CAP assessments, and trainings. Program activities

are anticipated to resume in 2021, including activities for *Held in Trust* (HIT). It is also important to note that several funds are restricted in use, and this speaks to the need for the Cultural Heritage Fund (CHF), which holds unrestricted funds to meet unexpected challenges and opportunities.

2021 and 2022 Annual Meetings

Suzanne Davis, AIC Vice President, expressed her excitement about our first joint meeting with the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections. As of the time of the Business Meeting, there were more than 1,800 registrants for the meeting, the most ever. Through the Attendees Assisting Attendees campaign, 80 registrations were able to be provided for colleagues who would not have otherwise been about to attend, and through the George Stout Fund, more than 200 students were able to attend for free. She noted that, following feedback and building on last year's virtual meeting, most meeting sessions took place on Zoom, with more than 260 talks and posters. Davis thanked the program committee members, officers, program chairs, and staff, and highlighted the work of Meetings and Advocacy Director Ruth Seyler, FAIC Programs Director and Administrative Manager Tiffani Emig, and Communications and Membership Director Bonnie Naugle.

She then noted that the 2022 Annual Meeting will mark AIC's 50th anniversary, reflecting our 1972 incorporation, based out of the IIC American group. Davis added that while the meeting is planned to be in-person, there will be some virtual aspects for those who might not be able to or want to travel. The meeting will take place at the Westin Bonaventure in Los Angeles. She recognized the hope and excitement of possibly meeting in person, while still being present in this moment that may be painful or uncertain. She announced the theme of the meeting, "Reflecting on the Past, Imagining the Future," and encouraged members to start considering submissions. Davis concluded by welcoming incoming Vice President Rogge and noting that the 2023 Annual Meeting will take place in Jacksonville, and the 2024 Annual Meeting will be in Salt Lake City.

State of the Organization

Eryl Wentworth, AIC & FAIC Executive Director, began by thanking staff members. She acknowledged the tremendous impact of the pandemic on the arts and culture sectors. Wentworth noted that AIC and FAIC benefited from PPP loans, as well as funding through the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) CARES Act. AIC and FAIC will apply for loan forgiveness for the PPP loans as soon as they are eligible. She attributed the organizations' success in navigating the pandemic in large part to the ongoing support of members and donors, the flexibility and support of funders, and improved returns on investments, but as uncertainty continues, AIC and FAIC will continue to be financially cautious.

Wentworth acknowledged several key partnerships, such as the Holly Maxson Conservation Fund, which will support outreach to introduce students to conservation and career pathways in preservation. She also thanked the Getty Foundation, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, and the Mellon Foundation. She noted the recent completion of the Mellon Foundation's Comprehensive Organizational Health Initiative, a three-year project, which helped make both organizations more sustainable and included seed money for the CHF. She also noted the essential support of the Mellon Foundation, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training, NEH, National Endowment for the Arts, and Tru Vue, that enable FAIC to deliver professional development opportunities for the conservation and preservation field. She echoed Ellis and noted the transformative power of HIT, which will guide the development of new strategic plans for both organizations, and encouraged members to view the recording of the HIT session. Sharing a list of new and long-time partners, she acknowledged and thanked all of our funders and partners for their support.

The importance of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) initiatives was emphasized, as well as viewing all AIC and FAIC activities through a DEIA lens. A new initiative to review the Code of Ethics, Standards for Practice, and Commentaries will be launching soon, and members will be invited to participate. AIC and FAIC will continue to assess ways we can be more equitable and inclusive. Wentworth closed by thanking all those working to transform the field and all volunteers, highlighting the contributions of the Equity and Inclusion Committee (EIC).

AIC Board President Ellis built on Wentworth's comments to reflect on where the organization is today versus a year ago and expressed the hope that members feel reassured that the organization is on higher and safer

ground. She noted the survey, led by Sarah Reidell, that evaluated the impacts of the COVID-19 survey and will help guide AIC in supporting membership. With new and ongoing grant programs, AIC and FAIC will be helping drive progress in the field and increased stability. She acknowledged the difficult waters being navigated and cautioned against complacency. Ellis pushed for conservators to “humanify” the profession, and not to attempt to strive for neutrality. She recognized violence against Black and AAPI communities, climate change, and social unrest as subjects that conservation should engage with, focusing not only on objects but the people who care for and about our cultural heritage. She noted stances the organization has taken through position statements and papers, and thanked members who brought their expertise and emotional labor to help craft statements that put a human face on the work of conservation. She also acknowledged the Member Engagement Subcommittee and Affinity Groups as working to create safe spaces for shared experience, and the Membership Designation Working Group (MDWG), for seeing ways to fairly evaluate professional experience and more successfully convey who conservators are and what they do.

Membership Designations Working Group Update

Nancy Pollak and Deborah Trupin, Co-chairs of the MDWG, provided a brief update of the past year’s activities. Since last year, the group has reviewed and edited FAQ documents and proposals to incorporate member feedback and address concerns, finalized the Essential Competencies, reviewed rubrics and made them available for comment, and developed two possible systems for Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Trupin shared the Essential Competencies, noting that there are nine “foundational” competencies which any Professional Member should possess, and then three “practice” competencies, reflecting different areas of expertise. The rubrics reflect the Competencies, and the application is designed to solicit work or project examples of how the applicant possesses the Competencies. The rubric and Competencies are available to applicants and sponsors to develop an application, and sponsors will endorse an application, but sponsor letters will be anonymous, so the sponsors will not be known to the Membership Committee (MC).

She then discussed how CPD would be evaluated. Members would be able to track CPD on the website and acceptable activities would fall under three categories: teaching and disseminating information, learning and skill development, and service and outreach. All three categories would have activities that are free or low-cost and if an activity is not listed, members can add suggested activities. The two proposed systems are:

- Over a five-year period, CPD credits are assigned a value and a PM must accrue 15 credits to maintain their status.
- Over a five-year period, all CPD activities are weighted equally, and a PM must do ten activities to maintain their status.

The new proposal has been assembled and shared on the Member Community and the MDWG is seeking comments, either through Google Form, email, or through attending a Listening Session. Two major changes are in the new proposal:

- While two years of work experience is still required, there is no restriction on when the experience has to be gained, meaning that pre-program work can be counted toward this requirement.
- The three categories of Conservation, Preservation, and Scientific Analysis will be used in the application process to assist with evaluation, but these categories will not be part of the designation. All PMs will be known as “Professional Member.” Existing PAs and Fellows will be expected to choose a category, but only to be used in creating mentorship categories.

Pollak and Trupin reminded members that Fellow will become a separate recognition that can be held alongside Professional Membership. Fellow will solely be a recognition amongst peers and existing Fellows would be brought in as both Fellows and PMs. Once attained, a member will remain a Fellow, which would not require any form of CPD to maintain, but if the Fellow would like to maintain their PM status, they must do CPD.

The MDWG’s next steps will be to review comments on the new proposal and to hold Listening Sessions over the next month to solicit additional feedback. Following this period, additional edits will be needed. When the proposal is completed, the MDWG will submit it to the Board for approval, following which all

members would vote. To implement any approved changes, the Bylaws would also need to be changed, which would require a member vote as well.

Pollak and Trupin then answered questions on the work of the MDWG and the proposal. Topics included:

- The rubric contains many possible suggestions of ways an applicant might be able to demonstrate how they possess the Essential Competencies. Applicants are not expected to have a set number of activities, projects, or skills demonstrating how they meet the Competencies, and are not expected to fulfill all possible examples.
- While Fellow is a recognition by peers, a person may self-nominate for Fellow status, or may be put forward for Fellow by a colleague.
- The rubric is not used to evaluate applications for Fellow.
- As PM is not an accreditation or certification, there is not reciprocity with any other membership systems, such as CAPC or ACR. There is no one-to-one comparison with international certification.
- Following approval of the proposal and the Bylaws changes, the PM designation will be promoted and marketed to the public as well as collecting institutions, Federal agencies, and allied professional organizations. AIC will work with conservators in private practice to understand what materials will be most effective in reaching clients and contracting organizations. AIC cannot regulate or require that any organization use PM status as a hiring requirement.
- When PMs list themselves on the AIC site, they are expected to accurately report areas of expertise and services, which will allow for clients to make informed decisions about hiring.
- Following bylaws changes, only PMs will be listed in the "Find an Expert" tool.
- CPD requirements will begin from the proposal taking effect and will start a five-year cycle of CPD for PMs.
- Following approval of the proposal, there are additional edits that need to be made to the Bylaws, separate from the member designation changes, which may take additional time. A timeline will be provided to membership following the vote to approve the proposal.
- If PMs do not believe they will be able to meet CPD requirements in the five-year period, there is a 60-day grace period, however, if a PM is taking an extended leave of absence from the field, there will be flexibility.
- Workplace achievements and significant treatments could be considered under the Learning and Skill Development CPD category.
- PM will serve as a terminal membership category and Fellow will be purely honorary.
- There will continue to be a searchable pool of individuals who are willing to serve as sponsors for PM and Fellow.
- Applicants should choose to apply under the category that best reflects their strengths, skills, and training, even if they have qualifications that fall under the other categories.
- The chief advantages of the new system include more transparent evaluation criteria, tied more closely to stated and demonstrated experience, more equitable opportunities to solicit sponsors, and a better balance of flexibility in meeting criteria while offering specific guidance.

The MDWG will address additional questions during Listening Sessions. Members are strongly encouraged to provide feedback on the new proposal and attend Listening Sessions.

Presentation of the 2021 President's Award

The President's Award is given at the discretion of the Board President. Ellis recognized the work of Pollak and Trupin, noting their inclusive approach to seeking input across membership to develop this new membership designation system. She acknowledged that they were aided by many generous and thoughtful colleagues and have conscientiously carried out the assignment given.

Pollak and Trupin thanked Board members past and present, particularly Sue Murphy, Jennifer McGlincheySexton, and Molly Gleeson, as well as Cathy Hawks, who serves as the Member Initiative Coordinator. They also thanked the MC and EIC, as well as AIC and FAIC staff, highlighting Executive Director Eryl Wentworth, Communications & Membership Director Bonnie Naugle, Membership Manager Ryan Winfield, FAIC Outreach Coordinator Katelin Lee, and Membership Operations Assistant Erika Goergen. Particular thanks were expressed to the members of the MDWG, including Chair Emerita Stephanie Lussier, Jess Walthew, Laura Hartz Stanton, Catherine Matsen, Colleen O'Shea, Emily Frank,

Brenna Campbell, and Joanna Dunn. They closed by encouraging engagement and participation within AIC for a thriving and growing organization.

Old Business

A question was asked regarding availability of the Treasurer's Report for further review. Financial information is available on the [Governance page](#) and the recording of the Business Meeting will be available through October.

There was a question about whether decisions had been made about virtual versus in-person meetings in the future. Seyler responded that the 2022 Annual Meeting will debut a virtual component of the in-person meeting. Attendees will have the option to register for the in-person meeting, which will include access to virtual components, or to register for only the virtual component, which will include both select live-streamed sessions as well as select recorded sessions made available following the meeting.

New Business

There was no new business.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting by Braun, seconded by Eusman. The meeting was adjourned at 1:48 p.m.