

Internal Advisory Group (IAG) Meeting
Doubletree Hotel, Washington DC
November 13, 2010

Call to Order and Introductions

AIC President Meg Craft called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and welcomed the representatives from all the specialty groups and committees, along with the publication and web editors. Attendees were thanked for volunteering their time to AIC.

The AIC Board of Directors recognized Ruth Seyler, AIC Membership and Meetings Director, for her remarkable work in response to a crisis with the Pittsburgh host hotel and the successful move of the annual meeting to Philadelphia. Board members presented Ruth with a bouquet of flowers and attendees applauded her dedication and skill.

IAG members then introduced themselves and stated what their goals were for their service to AIC and the future of the organization. The list of goals included:

- Making CoOL more sustainable and stable
- Working on outreach to make AIC and conservation more visible to the public
- Strengthening interaction among and between specialty groups for better communication
- Developing workshops to make conservation education more accessible and affordable
- Ensuring that *JAIC* is produced with the highest quality possible
- Building relationships with conservators for more involvement in our professional organization
- Involving emerging conservators more strongly with AIC
- Creating a user-friendly and accurate chart for the annual meeting
- Continuing to build and edit our wiki resources
- Continuing efforts toward sustainability of conservation and AIC
- Continuing support of AIC to respond to natural disasters
- Continuing and improving appreciation of volunteers

AIC Annual Meetings – 2011 and Beyond

2011 General Session Update - Pam Hatchfield, AIC Board Vice President

The theme of this year's General Session will be *Ethos, Logos, Pathos: Ethical Principals and Critical Thinking in Conservation*

The goal of this year's meeting is to examine how ethics, logic, and perception guide conservation decisions.

- The papers being presented at the 2011 Annual Meeting were selected from a highly competitive field. 188 total abstracts were submitted. Of the 64 submissions for the general session, seven papers have been selected.
- We have received more submissions from outside of the United States than in previous years, truly showing AIC's growing presence on the international stage.

- Posters, 25 submissions in total, are still being reviewed for the poster session, but assistance has been requested for those international applicants with English as a second language.

General Session Themes and Timing- Pam Hatchfield, AIC Board Vice President

- For the 40th anniversary in 2012, AIC would like to recall how far the organization has come and how it can continue to grow.
- A general theme of “Advocacy and Outreach” is suggested as a way to involve other fields and to broaden the scope of the discussion. The aim is to create a different approach during the 40th anniversary in Albuquerque and to move away from the standard presentation-then-Q&A format toward one with more interaction and conversation. A call may be put out for papers as early as April of next year to facilitate members of other fields participating in the meeting.
- This annual meeting is an opportunity to look back to see what has and has not worked for (and within) the field and look to the future. A suggested mode for changing the tone of this meeting has been to drop specialty group specialized sessions in favor of more all-encompassing general themes that may promote more interdisciplinary studies.
- Efforts will be made to involve more conservators from abroad to present from international training programs and to gain knowledge of the perception of conservation from outside the United States.
- Because outreach and advocacy are proposed themes of the meeting, there is a desire to pursue public relations perspectives on how conservation is seen. One possibility is to develop grassroots-level PR tools for every member to promote projects and the field to the general public in non-technical language. Other possibilities include:
 - Invite a PR professional to instruct conservators how to describe their profession without as much technical language so that the general public can become more aware of the work that happens and knowledge is transmitted more effectively.
 - Issue invitations to journalism professionals to hear their perspective on how conservation can be presented in this format to better suit the general public.
- Possibly invite Anne-Imelda Radice, former director of IMLS, to serve as a keynote speaker to speak about collections care advocacy and outreach.
- Use different methods to stimulate discussion and attract attendees, such as:
 - Organize a film festival or discussion with authors who have used conservation in their works.
 - Develop visitor-use surveys to understand how the public uses sites that highlight conservation treatments and what the public knows/understands about conservation.
 - Have a recording booth set up for a kind of StoryCorps project.
 - Create a conservation scavenger hunt in Albuquerque, using social media which will be left with the city after the meeting as a chamber of commerce marketing tool.
 - Determine how to better promote Preservation Week as a marketing tool for conservation. AIC was a partner in Preservation Week in its first year and is a partner again this year. See www.ala.org/preservationweek

- In further discussion about possible meeting formats that would allow for greater conversation and discussion, AIC is looking at such organizations as the American Association of Museums, Archaeological Institute of America, and the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art to see how smaller sessions are managed and grouped. Ideas to consider are:
 - Targeted topics for specialty groups that would allow for shorter presentations with more discussion
 - Structuring sessions to allow questions *during* presentations rather than strictly afterwards
 - Asking specialty groups to work in a larger program committee that might develop themed sessions rather ones than based on specialty. Each session might then be developed and managed by one specialty group.
 - Arranging additional time for poster authors to interact with attendees.
- Though some may fear that a “topics and theme” based discussion may dissuade purely scholarly papers, AIC as a whole could decide that the 40th Anniversary should be a year to move toward reaching out to other disciplines and the general public. The theme also does not preclude scholarly papers, because other disciplines may want to weigh in on possible themes of advocacy or outreach.
 - A panel will create a detailed summary to be disseminated well in advance of the meeting so that those outside of the field have time to think about the subject matter.
- The discussion also included incorporating video and other forms of technology into the annual meeting.
 - Education videos have been suggested, but these could be problematic if the public is encouraged to treat their own collections items. If there are videos, they should focus on the thought process and decision making rather than actual treatments.
 - There are technological and monetary issues (in addition to obtaining presenter permissions) to solve before a live video feed at the annual meeting could be organized. A low-cost way to include more technology is to have independent bloggers who would agree to basic standards of practice to document the event from a personal perspective. Suggestions are made to have guest bloggers from other disciplines (an appraiser, curator, development professional, etc.) attend so that a panorama of views is shown.
 - If a group of attendees is willing to blog about the meeting, a tutorial session on the best use of this media might be organized for these volunteers.
- The title and branding of the meeting needs to be thought about carefully. There was concern that those who work for governmental agencies might not be allowed to attend a meeting on advocacy and outreach. Focusing outreach on presenting conservation treatments and the decision-making process might address this.

Meetings Primer, AIC and You--Ruth Seyler, Membership & Meetings Director

- Plans for meeting in Philadelphia 2011 are proceeding smoothly. Programming is shaping up well, as are several joint specialty group sessions. Contracts are about to be signed for the opening reception to be held at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Please encourage your members to attend the annual meeting.
- Ruth spoke about why the information-gathering survey was sent out. The data indicated what was most important to members and served as a guide during

- negotiations. Keeping costs the same as going to Pittsburgh was found to be most important, while the city and dates did not hold as much bearing. Philadelphia was not included on the original survey, because it was too early in negotiations to know whether the city would be a real possibility. The other cities included had all indicated a clear ability and desire to host the meeting.
- Though it seems as though there are many venues across the country that could host the meeting, Ruth explained that only roughly 5% of those sites would actually work, either because the space was too big or too small for our meeting. Some possible venues are more desirable cities (such as Philadelphia) that would not book meetings of our size more than two years prior to the event. Of that 5%, only 5% would actually host AIC. One reason is the fact that we use quite a bit of meeting space (of all sizes) while not spending as much as other organizations on food & beverage and room rentals. Some members have suggested moving the event to a college campus, but AIC has outgrown this type of venue, and colleges themselves are using their meeting space more often. Because of the economy, more cities that may not have considered hosting AIC in the past are viewing our meeting more favorably.
 - Support AIC by staying at the host hotel. View the costs that come along with the annual meeting as part of a bigger picture. Food & beverage prices and negotiated room blocks are how hotels meet their bottom line. Members can help AIC by hosting events at the host hotel, although the prices may not be the lowest. It is important to remember that our contract with the hotel stipulates spending a certain amount and, if room blocks or food & beverage minimums are not met, AIC pays for goods and services not rendered. Specialty groups can help by involving AIC staff more with contract negotiation and decision making. AIC as an organization has more negotiating power than individual specialty groups and might be able to bundle events to save on costs. Together, it might also be possible to develop creative events involving both off-site tours and hotel receptions.

Managing Budgets and Reserves—Ken Beam, Finance Director

- The specialty groups as a whole have a large reserve that is part of the overall holdings by AIC and are included in the consolidated audit. Every association should hold reserves that can protect it in case of an emergency. The amount held depends on the organization and might be in the range of six months to a year of annual expenses. An excess of reserves means that the organization is not serving its members appropriately and could trigger an IRS review.
- Specialty groups should review their reserves each year to ensure some funds are available in case of a steep decline in revenues or to fund any planned special projects. Think strategically about specialty group goals and activities.
- In recent years, specialty groups have vastly overestimated budgeted annual expenses. In the past two years, AIC has projected a negative budget due specifically to specialty group budget estimates. The deficit projected by specialty groups in 2011 is \$65,500. AIC's projected budget deficit overall is \$64,261. A projected deficit budget does not reflect well on AIC when presenting annual revenues and expenses to funders or others.
- Ken asked treasurers to work with him to plan annual budgets. Ruth can assist by providing annual meeting estimates. If special projects are planned, be realistic

about what can be accomplished in one year. Consider working with AIC staff to develop a balanced budget, along with an estimated use of reserves for any special project, which would be accounted for separately and based on available reserves (not tied into an annual budget). AIC staff need to be kept up to date on the progress of special projects and, to manage cash flow, upcoming expenses.

Financial Report—Brian Howard, AIC Board Treasurer

- Income from membership dues and the annual meeting is a major component of revenue and allows dues to remain low year after year. Advertising income is the largest revenue stream for publications. Sales only really increase with new publications. The estimate of income from investments is conservative.
- AIC budgeted expenses reflect a deficit of \$64,260 due to projected spending by specialty groups. There is no “fat” in the budget to speak of, and AIC has had to carefully balance actual income against controllable expenses to maintain a positive year-end report. Many expenses, however, are for established programs with fixed costs or are contractual obligations.
- AIC net assets have steadily increased since the economic downturn of 2008, and are again approaching the high of 2007.
- FAIC budgeted revenues reflect expected grant, workshop, investment, and donation income. Unfortunately, a very small percentage of annual donation income (which is low overall at under \$47,000 projected in 2011) is from individual members.
- In 2010, FAIC received a \$3.4 million grant from the Mellon Foundation to establish a conservation department at the Hermitage Museum. This project involves travel expenses, as well as cataloging, training, lab equipment, digital documentation, a web component, and more. Documentation of the project will serve as a model for best practices on CoOL.
- Note that the full grant award was accounted for in 2010. This is true even though only \$1.6 million was received in 2010, and the project grant lasts four years. So, while 2010 showed a large increase in net assets, budgets over the following four years will show deficit spending. This method of accounting is called accrual accounting and is the standard accounting practice for nonprofits. This method provides a more accurate picture of an organization’s current condition than does cash accounting.

Communications and Outreach

Communications Update—Nancie Ravenel, AIC Board Director of Communications

- We have an opportunity to rethink the structure of specialty groups’ presence on the Web to better integrate a more common message and appearance. There may be an opportunity to join a working group to solidify joint goals in publications and other media produced by specialty groups. Now is a time to think about the best possible practices to make the website more efficient and user-friendly (such as new search engine capabilities).

- We have a few requests for help:
 - We are seeking names—people bringing new perspectives—for a review panel for the Kress publication fellowship grant. Reviewer names are kept confidential.
 - The American Association of Museums is interested in suggestions of publications about collections care for their bookstore. They also are interested in a publication partnership with AIC, for either print or electronic publications.
 - We are reviewing availability of literature. What publications do you use the most? What publications you seek are out of print or hard to find?
- There was some discussion involving the cost/benefit ratio of having a print version of the AIC Directory. While AIC hopes to have online content soon, members have expressed interest in continuing to receive a hard copy of the Directory. Once the online version is available, a survey will be sent out to assess use. If a majority of members express the desire for only online content, print on demand copies can be produced for those who still want a hard copy.

Specialty Group Websites—Ryan Winfield, AIC Membership Coordinator

- Many specialty groups are still hosted on CoOL, but the goal is to have all groups use the AIC website platform and content management system to host their sites. So far the Paintings, Textiles, and Research & Technical Studies groups have all been moved to the AIC site with positive feedback.
- Leaders from each group can attest to the easy-to-navigate pages and the ease of moving content from CoOL to AIC's site. Having each group's site hosted by AIC ensures more uniformity and up-to-date information while still allowing for each group to customize the template to suit their own needs
- The AIC specialty group webpages will focus on AIC business and administrative work. Major content can be housed on CoOL and be credited to the appropriate group.
- AIC is taking action to make the presence of Committees and Task Forces more visible online and to make the website in general more accessible and easily navigable. In the future, AIC would like to have more member-only content.

Specialty Group Listservs and Wikis—Rachael Arenstein, AIC E-Editor

- AIC listserv use is a member benefit. Over time, many people no longer paying dues have been able to remain on specialty group listservs because it was time-consuming for SG volunteers to manage lists updates. The AIC membership associate has now been designated to update these lists on a regular basis.
- A few things to consider about using the listservs:
 - Discourse needs to be respectful. Please remember that board members, staff, and others subscribe to various listservs and are aware of discussion threads. Concerns should be expressed and questions asked, but do so thoughtfully.
 - Use the monthly reminder emails to manage your subscription.
 - Standard guidelines for the listservs will be listed on the website.
- Migration of listservs from Stanford to AIC is ongoing. Archives on the Stanford server were searchable by keyword, but this function is not yet working on CoOL. Work is being done to correct this.

- Wikis are a wonderful form of collaborative professional content that can be useful to AIC and our colleagues. Several specialty groups have put up new content and are using the platform's functions to their advantage, but new information is always helpful. The goal is to have the best possible information online. Wikis are most beneficial when all groups pool their resources and collaborate. While we can provide access for designated content editors, the functions that control who can comment or join discussions is not functioning properly. Work is being done to fix this.
- The specialty group catalog wikis are being monitored and edited. A new materials wiki is in progress, as is one for exhibition conservation standards.
- It has been suggested that AIC sponsor a wiki write-in day to inspire members to provide new content and editing. Graduate students should be encouraged to work on wikis to learn from the feedback

Publications—Morgan Gilpatrick, Communications Director

- Top priorities for production are the *JAIC*, *AIC News*, annual meeting print pieces, and the 2nd edition of the digital documentation book. Participating on the CoOL Working Group to develop plans to enhance CoOL is also a priority.
- Future goals for streamlining content and integrating communications material are:
 - Improving navigation on the website
 - Using metadata to make content more searchable and to allow for keyword searches with more content.
 - Taking advantage of linking content with other resources
 - Possibly using semantic tagging to help material be discovered
 - Moving towards an online submission system for JAIC's peer review process
 - Consolidating photos from different events into one location

***AIC News*—Lisa Goldberg, AIC News Editor**

- Lisa announced that the Health and Safety book, a joint publication of the AIC Health & Safety Committee and SPNHC, will be released in December.
- Some content has been moved out of the print newsletter to the electronic version, including specialty group columns, grants and fellowships, and courses. SG columns are submitted to Lisa before going to Morgan for posting in the online newsletter, and then are posted on the SG sites.
- A goal for the newsletter is to have a moveable wall of content so that all archived material is viewable by members, but not the general public. Work is being done to have *AIC News* archives available online.
- While some members enjoy having online content of *AIC News* available, the general membership still requests a print edition, so it will be maintained until another survey shows a change in view. Future content of *AIC News* will not change much, but more content may move online. When an online version becomes available on the site, an email will be sent with the link to allow users to access the latest edition. Feedback regarding online content has been positive, if limited, and more commentary is welcomed.

JAIC--Michele Derrick, JAIC Chief Editor

- While there are typically three issues of JAIC produced each year, this year there will only be two. The Journal is dependent upon a constant inflow of submissions, and it takes about 18 months to move from initial submission to print. Submissions in 2008 were low, so the result is fewer articles ready in 2010.
- One special-topic issue/year is typical. In 2011, an issue on mount making will be produced. Another special issue, From Can to Canvas, is approved for 2012.
- Some suggest more solicitation from students, while the specialty group chairs are encouraged to ask their members to become reviewers and to submit papers for review.

Media Attention—Nancie Ravenel, Board Director of Communications

- In the past few years, more articles about conservation and preservation of cultural heritage have appeared in major publications. We may not always like what is written, but at least the field is more visible. There are two ways in which AIC can become involved when an issue of conservation makes its way onto the public stage.
 - One option is to be reactive. If responses to an article are fast and cogent, they may be printed in the letters to the editor. Members can assist by contacting Eryl Wentworth when it's important that AIC respond to a specific article. Members can also assist by providing content for the response. We cannot guarantee that AIC's response will be printed or if it will have any impact following the initial article.
 - The other option, which is more efficient, is to be proactive. One way to do this is to tell AIC of important or timely projects that might be of interest to the media. Keep in mind that lead time for a daily feature is one month. Cultivate a relationship with a PR person on your staff or a freelancing writer. There may be opportunities to leverage conservation and AIC in the media. All media requests to AIC go to the executive director.
- To learn more about working with the media and learning how to tell your collections stories, go to <http://learningtimeevents.org/c2c/session1/>
- Note that AIC is gathering Stories in Conservation, many of which could be of interest to the press.

Bylaws, Proposed Revisions Discussion—Martin Burke, Bylaws Committee Member

- The AIC bylaws are found online and printed in AIC Directory. They are the rules by which our organization operates. Bylaws cannot be amended by the board, and require a super majority for change. At last year's annual meeting, the rules were expanded to allow for electronic voting, enfranchising those who cannot be present at the meeting to vote. Of the 28 proposed revisions currently being discussed by the Bylaws Committee, most are simple updates to reflect current standards.
- One significant proposed revision relates to the use of AIC's name in advertising. The goal is for Professional Associates and Fellows to be able to show that they have attained a status of AIC membership through peer-review and have agreed to

abide by the AIC Code of Ethics. Our name and logo should not be found on the website of firms, even if the owner or some employees are PAs or Fellows. This implies endorsement by AIC. Institutional and Associate members are not to use the AIC name or logo on websites. AIC is notified at least once a month that our name and logo are being misused.

- The current proposal, recommended by legal counsel as common for associations, is to create and register an official “mark” similar to our logo, but indicating PA or Fellow status. This mark would be sent to all PAs and Fellows, electronically, and with guidelines that must be agreed to prior to use. The mark is for use by an individual only, not an organization. A “cease and desist” letter to any firm’s website using the AIC logo would then be a clear and simple form letter.
- Note that the use of AIC’s name in advertising is in the AIC Code of Ethics, which would also have to be revised.
- Another section of the bylaws that is being reviewed is on allegations of unethical conduct. It was emphasized that AIC is not a punitive group, but one which handles these allegations with arbitration and education. Most ethic complaints deal with bad business practices and reflect communication issues between a client and conservator.

Governance, Leadership, and Membership—Ruth Seyler, Membership & Meetings Director

Specialty Group Elections and Governance

- SG elections are now more streamlined
 - It was suggested that an email blast for SG nominations be sent out. Any nominations that come in through this method would not replace committees’ nominations.
 - It may be helpful to continue to tie specialty group elections to board elections in January to provide a higher rate of participation overall. If specialty groups have different timelines for governance elections, they may be able to work with AIC to work on a different timeline to send out a call for nominations in the same format.

Leadership and responsibility

- Specialty groups follow two patterns or models for their officers, either 1) the chair serves for two years and the other officers for one year or 2) the program chair becomes chair and each officer serves one year.
- In the second model, it might be helpful to add an assistant program chair to provide more continuity in leadership and knowledge of SG activities.
- AIC is striving for better communication among the specialty group officers, as well as between the officers and AIC. Volunteer work is hard and good communication is essential to prevent the loss of valuable knowledge and to serve members well.
- Ruth suggested hosting a conference call for all outgoing and incoming officers following annual elections to transmit important information from one generation of officers to the next.

Serving your members effectively

- It is helpful to think of one's role as an officer as one link in a long chain of governance in the history of the organization. Taking the role of facilitator rather than an iconoclast will allow each specialty group to move forward while not losing any of the traditions that members of the group may truly value. Think about communications strategies and make use of such tools as email blasts and surveys. Surveys are effective tools when considering a major change that would be felt far after one or two terms. Send out an information-gathering survey to learn the impact of such major changes as stopping postprints or spending down reserves.
 - An effective example of this is when the Book & Paper Group asked for input regarding their postprints. Members indicated that they valued the print publication of this volume and would rather have a slight increase in dues to support printing.
- Remember that if something unavoidable comes up that prevents a volunteer member from serving at their fullest capacity AIC is here and would like to help. AIC understands that volunteer positions require a significant time commitment and unavoidable events can obstruct timely fulfillment of duties. AIC is always available to aid in financial matters, contracts, and other business.

Specialty Group Membership numbers

- SG membership is declining, while AIC membership is increasing. What can be done to reverse this trend?
- Specialty groups should consider how to make the cost/benefit ratio most beneficial for members. Consider sending out a survey to understand why members may have dropped some groups. Be sure to stop members-only benefits, such as SG listserv use, from those who do not pay dues. Connect to members more often. Explore ways to involve members regularly and to make the group more valuable to them.
- An important member benefit is receipt of publications issued by specialty groups. AIC staff would like to be more involved on this front and suggest regular communication with the postprint editors. AIC staff can help obtain bids from publishers and for mailings to assure the best possible rate for publications being sent to members. The publications committee can discuss any of these options further, including ensuring that "Best Practices for Online Publications" is available online and adding member-only content on the website.

Wrap Up and IAG Meeting Adjourned—Meg Craft, AIC Board President

Meg Craft thanked the members of the IAG for their participation and declared the meeting adjourned.