

Internal Advisory Group (IAG) Meeting
Washington, DC
November 14, 2015
9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Attendees

Specialty Group, Network, and Committee Chairs or their designees; JAIC, AIC News, and Web Editors; AIC Board members; AIC and FAIC Staff

Call to Order and Introductions

AIC and FAIC Board President Pamela Hatchfield called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. and thanked everyone for attending and for his or her service to AIC. She reminded those present that they are the conduit between the board and the membership. Most changes in the organization happen because of our volunteer leaders. Hatchfield acknowledged the FAIC and AIC staff for deftly incorporating programs and staff from Heritage Preservation over the past year. This transition allows FAIC to take on a broader, more far-reaching role.

Hatchfield thanked all who have contributed to FAIC, and said she will continue to ask that others consider giving to this important organization. She asked attendees to be messengers to their constituents to support FAIC. Hatchfield also showed samples of the emergency wheel produced by Heritage Preservation and noted that there are a large number of Spanish wheels in storage in Washington. Anyone who can assist [financially] in the office's effort to ship them to organizations in need should consider volunteering.

IAG members introduced themselves and spoke of their goals as volunteer leaders. Some goals, beyond the immediate needs within their area of responsibility, included:

- Drawing greater connections between conservators and collection care professionals
- Creating an environment where education is important
- Increasing communications within AIC and spreading knowledge to other communities
- Continuing to strengthen the annual meeting and to invite diverse communities to join in
- Working toward economic, social, and environmental sustainability in conservation
- Addressing diversity
- Identifying and assessing trends in publishing

Hatchfield wrapped up the introductions by stating that it's important to remember the membership as a whole and how needs are changing. She notes that the newest member of the FAIC board of directors is an expert in marketing and he is looking forward to helping increase awareness of conservation. One way that has been discussed is to develop more stories about conservation. Hatchfield encouraged everyone to become a strong advocate for the field.

Internal and External Communications

Carolyn Riccardelli stated that her position of board director, communications, means that she is the liaison to a number of matters related to publications and outreach, and she acknowledged the many members of the team. She also noted that AIC has been making a number of technological advances to keep pace with the needs of the membership.

Sarah Reidell, the new Publications Committee chair, noted that the committee has been busy and asked the attendees to keep her informed of new Specialty Group members who should be on the committee. The [committee's] work is all about tying us to stories, advocating for the field, and reaching out. The committee has completed a "best practices for online publications" document that will be posted soon to the website. It is currently working on digital preservation policies, which follow recommendations made in the digital landscape survey. Postprints are being scanned, giving members access to member-only content, which others pay a fee to access. An internal web advisory group has been created, and it will explore analytics and update the site with new images. BPG has created a SG webpage to serve as a model for SGs and clarify the user experience. Feedback on the wireframe is being sought during a month-long window. The goal is to create more flexible access points and different pathways based on the websites of other professional organizations.

AIC News Editor Lisa Goldberg thanked staff members Bonnie Naugle and Brittany Dismuke for their work on AIC News. She asked for volunteers to modify PDFs of older issues for an electronic archive. Volunteers will have access to a Dropbox folder to redact personal information in each newsletter. [Note: in older issues, members' home addresses and phone numbers were often listed.] Goldberg then asked for an open discussion. AIC News is a focal venue for news, but there are new venues out there, and she asked where the meeting attendees go for their news. Social media, which has built a sense of community and segments content, was discussed. AIC could help readers connect to social media. Feedly can be used to gather and organize desired news sources. AAM has gone from an online publication to delivery of different kinds of information. The needs of their diverse members have resulted in changes in news content. It was noted that as AIC explores options, copyright issues with social media sites, such as Instagram, where content is owned by the company once posted, need to be taken into account. The Publications Committee could assist with this study.

JAIC Editor-in-Chief Julio M. del Hoyo-Meléndez thanked Senior Editor Paul Whitmore and staff members Naugle and Dismuke. He announced that Maney has been sold to Taylor & Francis. No significant changes should take place until the end of the current contract at the end of 2017. Meanwhile, other options can be explored. Taylor & Francis could increase JAIC readership and it may be possible to provide access for our members to other conservation-related publications. In October 2015, JAIC was approved for inclusion in the European Reference Index for the Humanities and the Social Sciences. This is impressive and should increase JAIC's impact. International diversity is important. The current acceptance rate of articles is 38%, due to the high standards held by the associate editors. Hoyo-Meléndez hopes to increase this percentage and to improve the turn-around time on articles as well.

The "Best of" special issue from SG postprints has been postponed, as the papers submitted have not met the required standards. A special issue on collection care is currently being developed. Note also that short communications are 3-4 pages with a few images. This is a good way to explore new topics, and the editors welcome these. JAIC seeks a balance between innovation and science, similar to Studies in Conservation. Treatment articles in JAIC must be innovative. During the discussion, it was suggested that MemberFuse might be a good platform for presenting more articles on treatments. It should be a member value,

with restricted access for members. It was also noted that there is no “one way” to exchange information. The role of MemberFuse versus listservs is an ongoing discussion.

With e-Editor Rachael Arenstein unable to attend, Riccardelli read her report. Arenstein noted that her two main functions are to develop and provide oversight for the professional content on AIC’s electronic platforms and to act as a conduit for SGs, Committees, Networks, and the membership to provide feedback for online needs of the membership. She chairs the CCN Advisory Group for the Connecting to Collections Care online community, which provides training and expertise to the broader preservation community. AIC member ideas for webinars or content are welcomed. The new STASHc (Storage Techniques for Art, Science and History Collections) website is found at www.stashc.com. Additional solutions are being included and new submissions are sought. The AIC wiki is growing and the site has been upgraded. Arenstein is seeking additional groups to use this collaborative editing platform.

The AIC blog has become a central communication tool for sharing activity with our membership and the world. It is a great platform for members to promote and review programs and discuss conservation topics in the news. The site is easy to use and direct access to post can be given or staff can post on your behalf. The biggest draw on the site are the blog posts from the annual meeting, when the average is about 600 hits a day. A 2016 goal is to use the blog to promote sessions in advance of the meeting as well as continuing to have members blog about presentations.

SGs are encouraged to participate in making the AIC’s Facebook and Twitter feeds vibrant. Contact Development & Education Coordinator Abigail Choudhury if you have content to post or tweet. Videos can also be shared on the AIC YouTube channel. Statistics on AIC online platforms show that our content is being found, used, and shared. Contact Arenstein with feedback.

Membership Coordinator Ryan Winfield expressed his interest in increasing the number of members using MemberFuse, AIC’s member-to-member communication tool tied to the database. All groups have been activated and have moderators, but members need to take part. We need member ambassadors to introduce topics and encourage conversation. The platform is fully customizable to send digests in different formats. Members should be encouraged to move from the listservs to MemberFuse. The content is archived in MemberFuse, and photos and videos can be posted there. To move to a more robust tool, AIC would need to invest in Higher Logic rather than continue to use the platform included with our website, MemberFuse. Staff will work on creating more pathways to MemberFuse and making it more seamless with the rest of the site, and will provide information on how to use the site effectively. The “announcements” tool, for instance, can be used to reach entire SGs. AIC’s volunteer leaders can be our ambassadors to encourage use.

Communications Director Bonnie Naugle reiterated all the venues available through AIC for members and opened the floor for discussion. Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter increase visibility for the field, as noted in ‘Boost the Conservation Signal!’ by Suzy Morgan, which can be found by going to <http://www.conservation-us.org/about-conservation/conservation-in-social-media>. The digital landscape report included the suggestion for FAIC to offer programs teaching digital competency, perhaps with ECPN involvement, as many members have voiced a desire for training in social media. A request was made to post step-by-step instructions on using social media and Memberfuse.

Financial Report

Jennifer Hain Teper, AIC and FAIC Board Treasurer, presented the financial report, showing AIC and FAIC revenue and expense multi-year budget-to-actual comparisons. Teper stated that the primary take-away from the AIC budget is that the low markets seen in 2015 have resulted in a conservative investment income projection for 2016. The 2016 meeting in Montreal may exceed the budget projections, which are based on a conservative number of attendees. She also noted that the primary reason for the projected deficit is the deficit projected by the Specialty Groups overall, but also includes support for the networks beyond basic operations.

FAIC is also projecting a deficit, as it is not bringing in enough unrestricted funds to support its activities. Grants consist primarily of restricted funds and do not allow enough to cover overhead expenses. A great deal of work is being done to increase access to unrestricted revenues in the future, and donations are increasing. The 2016 budget includes a conservative estimate for investment income. The increase in in-kind donation is due to the structure of the CAP program, which has been included in the budget. Notification about this program has not yet been made. Assuming responsibility for most of Heritage Preservation's emergency programs has also increased expenses. The primary difference between income and expenses is due to multi-year grants that are reported according to Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures or GAAP, which requires that income is booked in the year in which a grant is awarded, no matter when the funds are expended.

AIC Annual Meeting Planning

Ruth Seyler stated that although board Vice President Peggy Ellis could not attend the IAG meeting, she and Peggy have been in communication often about current and future annual meeting planning. With thanks to all those involved in 2016 meeting planning, she noted more than 420 abstracts were submitted. Generally, the number of abstracts is an indicator of attendance levels, so this is a good sign. The Canadian Association of Conservators is pleased with how the meeting is shaping up. Groups should be aware that some speakers may drop out between acceptance and the meeting, so it's important to consider alternate presentations.

Seyler noted that she is now moving into the marketing phase of the meeting and requested that everyone help by promoting the AIC meeting to allied professions. A page on the website is being developed for people unfamiliar with our meeting. Having talks with descriptions posted on SCHED generates interest well ahead of the meeting.

Ideas to boost traffic in the exhibit hall were solicited, as exhibitors have said that our full schedule of sessions is negatively affecting the number of people coming in to spend time with them. It was suggested that exhibitor sponsorships of sessions might drive traffic. Expanding time for coffee breaks was also suggested, though this would affect the number of speakers that could be scheduled, and it was noted that some attendees would not return to the day's final presentations with a longer afternoon break. One possibility to try in 2017 is to offer a reception in the exhibit hall the night before it opens. Raffles and games could be an added incentive to attend.

Seyler reiterated that AIC uses a great deal of meeting space compared to the size of our sleeping block, which limits our host city options. She noted that the 2017 meeting in Chicago will have less meeting space available than in Montreal. Seyler asked for thoughts

about expanding the meeting to four days rather than three. Another option is to offer more pre-sessions the day before the opening day. It was suggested that the general session be spread out and the extra day could be used to loosen up the schedule.

As a follow up to the MemberFuse discussion on annual meeting topics for 2017, a survey will be sent out to pursue themes for future annual meetings. Determining the theme earlier than in the past is helpful. Interest was also expressed in promoting member-proposed sessions. Having more than one theme is certainly a possibility. For instance, AIC's 45th anniversary is in 2017, and AIC could potentially offer three themes that had been done in the past. A document listing location and themes of past meetings was made available and will be posted on the website. The desire for more treatment presentations has been expressed, but each meeting has had a number of such presentations. It is possible that they just need to be identified more clearly. SCHED and its new mobile app might assist in highlighting treatment presentations.

A concept was suggested based on a phrase—"pull back the curtain on conservation"—that has been used by three different funders. This could encourage cross-pollination among conservation specialties and even include allied professionals. There are high-profile international projects that can be highlighted along with those more low-key stories that have a message well worth conveying.

AIC needs to be flexible about meeting dates and days of the week. The pattern changed for Montreal because those were the days made available by the hotel and the Canadian government waived large convention center fees. It's important to educate attendees about the importance of staying in the host hotel. AIC has kept host hotel costs as low as possible over many years. Additional difficulties result when attendees release their sleeping room close to the meeting date. Seyler suggested that AIC might offer a discounted registration fee for booking in the host hotel. AIC's attrition rate is 15-20%, when many organizations have only 5-10% attrition. Member education is key.

Seyler noted that staff members are always looking for ways to grow AIC membership and to help the SGs grow their membership. 2015 year end will show a 3% increase in membership. She encouraged groups to make use of MemberFuse for communications and electronic votes so that more members can participate and feel invested in AIC. An online handbook for officers is being prepared to be sure that important information is easily accessible.

Strategic Planning

Wentworth introduced the new strategic plans, noting the usefulness of stepping back every three years to assess the direction of the organization. The AIC and FAIC 2016-2018 strategic plans were just approved by their respective boards and will be posted online. The previous strategic planning process was focused on exploring future roles for FAIC. That grant-funded, multi-year process included facilitated forums, board cultivation events, and an FAIC and AIC board retreat. This year, we had no grant funds, but still invested in the same skilled facilitator. The boards met separately, but time was scheduled for both boards to meet together to discuss topics of shared interest.

As a membership organization, AIC's goals to improve service to its members evolve, but its strategic plan does not change dramatically over the years. In 1979, Specialty Groups were introduced, but now there is a trend toward emphasizing interdisciplinary work. Networks

serve this function and additional networks can be created. Guidelines for forming a network are being developed, with the first step being a discussion forum for the founding members to discuss goals and audience. The active nature of networks mean they need support beyond basic operating support, so AIC is exploring the possibility of charging a fee for some networks. This would be determined on a case-by-case basis. No fee would be considered for ECPN, for instance, as supporting this group is an investment in the future of AIC and the field. Recent planning discussions have focused on member-driven topics related to member categories.

Hatchfield added that AIC, with its active and involved membership, is not just for conservation professionals, but all who care about the preservation of cultural heritage. She encouraged everyone to read the new strategic plans, which provide some framework for the topics Tom Braun introduced next.

Membership Categories and Requirements

Board Director, Committees & Task Forces, Tom Braun noted that potential changes in membership categories were first discussed at the annual meeting in San Francisco and have continued with the board, staff, and Membership and Education & Training Committees.

Three primary questions have emerged:

1. PA and Fellow member categories are being used as de-facto credentials. Is the somewhat misleading PA name best, or would we be better served with a new name and a mark (like a trademark)? Would this change help consumers?
2. AIC committed to creating a home for collections care professionals. How should peer-reviewed categories be expanded to include collection care professionals?
3. Should a continuing education component be added to PA and Fellow status, or only PA? How could this be marketed broadly to support our peer-reviewed members? Educational requirements would include independent activities to ensure there is no undue financial burden.

The discussion that followed touched on a number of points:

Name changes

- While an historic name might be kept, it can be misleading. In libraries, a PA is a preservation administrator.
- An “associate” membership usually means those not directly involved in a field.
- PA is a term ingrained in government contracts, so outreach to such agencies as the National Park Service has already begun.
- Conservation Professional or CP is being considered for Professional Associate or PA.

Peer-reviewed categories

- Too many professional members remain at the “associate” level. How can potential changes at AIC encourage them to apply for a peer-reviewed category?
- Some feel that those who have completed a graduate training program should be eligible for PA without a long waiting period.

- Agreeing to abide by the AIC Code of Ethics is an important aspect of a peer-reviewed category.
- Criteria for allied professional peer-review categories is a major consideration.
- Discussions are underway about creating different categories for those with different expertise and what impact this might have.

Continuing education

- If a continuing education component is required, it should also be required for Fellows. At the same time, incentives for becoming a Fellow will need to be created and promoted.
- While a formal certification program is not feasible for AIC, a continuing education component will help AIC stand behind its peer-reviewed members and promote them.
- AIC is committed to making sure that financial constraints do not prevent anyone from fulfilling education requirements.
- An easy way to document credits, particularly independent units, will be necessary.
- Many professions have continuing education requirements, which encourage members to think about their involvement in their professional association more regularly.

Outreach/Marketing

- Outreach and education to the public must be an important aspect of any changes made.
- Having a new designation or mark associated with a name as a peer-reviewed designation will be helpful to those in private practice (particularly those seeking government contracts) and will be a good marketing opportunity.

Inappropriate use of AIC name and logo

- Notify a staff member if AIC's name or logo appear on a website or in promotion inappropriately. A standard letter is sent to advise what is appropriate.

Proposed Collaboration with the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA)

Anne Kingery Schwartz, Co-chair of the Health & Safety Committee, acknowledged Kathy Makos as the primary initiator in working with AIC and AIHA to encourage a partnership. In 2014, a small group of conservators and industrial hygienists presented a workshop on "Hidden Hazards within Art and Museum Collections" at the AIHA fall conference. The interest in this topic inspired the idea of a more formal collaboration. AIC agrees with the following goals for a partnership between the two organizations:

1. Fostering networking on national and local levels
2. Raising awareness among AIHA members about the risk management needs of the collection care and conservation workforce
3. Raising awareness among AIC members about the industrial hygiene (IH) and safety services available to help protect themselves from potentially hazardous work
4. Creating and disseminating knowledge of effective health hazard control strategies for conservation professionals and the institutions that employ them.

The board of directors of the AIHA requested metrics that this is a service that members would really use. The Health & Safety Committee is asking:

1. In what ways would AIC members need or seek resources from IH training, consultation, or assistance?
2. If AIC members were given access to professional safety training products, what would be at the top of the list and what format would be most useful?
3. If AIC members were provided with lists of local environmental safety and health consultants, how would they use them and what would be their top five questions?

In the short discussion period that followed, members noted areas in which IH and safety information are needed. These included x-ray safety, pesticides on items in collections that might be toxic, protocols in handling and storing human remains, responsibilities toward pregnant staff members, working across state and county lines with taxidermy and issues of disposal, air quality testing, vendor recommendations, working at heights, use of respirators, and how to ensure that small private studios are safe.

It was mentioned that having a resource list of AIHA members to contact with questions would be helpful. The H&S Committee is putting a great deal of information online, but local information can vary from county to county, so they are focusing on providing better search instructions. It's possible that AIHA members should write for the AIC wiki, too, and earn continuing education credits by doing so. An HI and safety webinar is being planned for May. It was noted that the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) is also a good resource to keep in mind.

Kingery Schwartz thanked participants for the feedback and said that additional feedback will be sought from the broader membership. MemberFuse will be used to seek member feedback, and participants should encourage their colleagues to respond.

AIC and its Foundation

FAIC staff members Eric Pourchot, Abigail Choudhury, Jessica Unger, and Sarah Saetren orchestrated a game to learn which table of attendees could provide the most correct names or phrases from acronyms related to cultural emergency response. A second winning table was the one that could imagine the most creative incorrect names or phrases. Acronyms abounded!

Wrap Up

Hatchfield thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and adjourned the meeting at 4:04 p.m.