

2021 AIC Internal Advisory Group Meeting

Friday, November 12

Held via Zoom

Attending: Specialty Group, Network, and Committee Chairs; *JAIC*, *AIC News*, and Web Editors; AIC Board Members; AIC and FAIC Staff

Suzanne Davis, AIC President, called the meeting to order at 11:02 am. She welcomed attendees and then invited them to introduce themselves and share their goals for their position.

Themes that appeared throughout included:

- Engaging with AIC members and stakeholders, including recognizing and supporting member efforts
- Making AIC more transparent and equitable and supporting DEIA activities across the organization
- Improving communications, both internally and externally, and nurturing community spaces for conversation and knowledge sharing
- Ensuring a smooth transition of institutional knowledge and leadership activities at all levels, including the Executive Director position
- Creating opportunities for professional development and outreach

Membership News

Bonnie Naugle, AIC Communications and Membership Director, provided updates on several membership topics, including new tools and resources available to members. A new mobile app has launched, allowing members to access the Online Community more easily while using their phones or devices. This app is still in development by the vendor, so members should share feedback about the user experience and features they would like to see. AIC will be adopting a new Association Management System (AMS) in the new year, which will streamline several processes for members, including member-only site access, membership renewals, and transactions.

Two new member engagement programs will be launching: the Member Engagement Subcommittee's Monthly Member Meetups, which will allow members to casually connect and discuss topics in conservation, and Member Preview Mondays, which will be open to members and prospective members to learn about member benefits.

Naugle noted resources like the [Volunteer](#) and [Volunteer Opportunities](#) pages on the AIC website, and that the [volunteer orientation](#) video and resource materials are available on the Learning platform. She encouraged attendees to use the IAG Community on Higher Logic to connect with other volunteer leaders and reach out to staff members to discuss ideas. She also shared several updates, including:

- The Conference Proceedings Subcommittee will be creating General Sessions postprints for the Opening General Session and Concurrent General Sessions, which will require several new volunteer editors.
- The Outreach Subcommittee is in the process of revising "[Caring for Your Treasures](#)" and has expanded to include the former K-12 Working Group.
- The Communications Committee is also reviewing copyright and permissions language and will be creating resources on ways to publish work
- There will be an open call for participants of a new Wiki working group soon.
- The Website Subcommittee is working on accessibility on our platforms and trying to create a single search tool across all AIC publications and resources.

Remarks from the President

Davis acknowledged that the organization is at an important moment of transition, referencing upcoming efforts to revise the Code of Ethics, the Member Designation Working Group vote, the upcoming strategic planning process, and the search for a new Executive Director. She also recognized AIC and FAIC Executive Director Eryl Wentworth, noting this is Wentworth's last IAG meeting following 17 years of service. FAIC Institutional Advancement Director Eric Pourchot will also be moving to part-time in February 2022, preceding retirement. She thanked both of them for their work and their thoughtful transition process, then thanked all volunteer leaders and staff for their efforts on behalf of the organization.

FAIC Programs and Trivia

FAIC staff shared information about programs through a series of trivia questions, referencing important milestones and statistics, including:

- 172,390 Emergency Response and Salvage wheels have been distributed around the world since 1997. Over the years, the wheel has been translated into Japanese, Serbian, French, Chinese, Dutch, Arabic, and more.
- Since FAIC began to administer the CAP program in 2017, 408 organizations have participated from 49 states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, and, in the coming year, Guam.
- FAIC administered 18 professional development programs in 2021 including 7 workshops at the AIC Annual Meeting. All programs this year were hosted online, and many in-person programs were postponed to 2022.
- The Holly Maxson Conservation Grant is FAIC's newest funding opportunity, and the 2-year grants of up to \$16,000 will support outreach activities to students, middle school through undergraduate, with the goal of introducing them to the field. The inaugural grant cycle is open now with applications due by February 15th.
- In 2004, when Eryl Wentworth came on staff, the only education staff member was Eric Pourchot, who was the Program Officer for Professional Development; Sarah Saetren is currently FAIC's Education Manager. Eric was also FAIC's only staff member at the time.
- As of our October edition of the Friends of Conservation Newsletter, which focused on caring for scrapbooks and photo albums, we're reaching 781 people with monthly preservation news, tips, and information about FAIC programs and initiatives.
- So far in 2021, 2,712 people attended 10 live Connecting to Collections Care webinars and 3 courses.

Financial Summary

Elmer Eusman, AIC and FAIC Treasurer, began by thanking Wentworth, Pourchot, Finance Director Linda Budhinata, and Programs & Operations Director Tiffani Emig for their work managing organizational finances and support in preparing the report.

He noted that despite uncertain times and challenges, both organizations are on steady financial ground. This is in part due to receiving three Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loans, two of which have been forgiven and with anticipation of the third being forgiven as well. Eusman also credited stock market improvement and careful budgeting for the 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting. He highlighted the independent audit process both organizations undertake each year and explained that there were no significant deficiencies, which speaks to the health of the finances and financial practices of AIC and FAIC.

Eusman noted that AIC is projecting a significant deficit in the 2022 budget. Some of this is due to Specialty Group reserve funds being spent down, and to conservative budgeting for attendance at the 2022 Annual Meeting, which will be in person with a virtual component. As this is the first year this has been attempted, it is extremely difficult to budget accurately. He also emphasized that AIC has the assets to cover the entirety of this deficit and that the overall position of AIC in respect to net assets and trends is positive.

The FAIC budget is highly impacted by restrictions on grant funding and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), as grant income must be booked in the year it is received, even if activities take place over multiple years. When GAAP are taken into account, FAIC is projecting a net gain for 2022. The Cultural Heritage Fund (CHF) will also serve to support FAIC's operations, allowing for greater flexibility and increasing FAIC's capacity to weather uncertainty in giving and grant making. Due to the impacts of the pandemic, fundraising has been more difficult. However, with current pledges, the CHF is at 40% of the target amount of 2 million dollars.

***Held in Trust* Project Update**

Pourchot shared resources for members to learn more about [Held in Trust](#) and join the project [discussion forum](#). *Held in Trust* is a cooperative agreement with the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), which leads to closer collaboration with NEH project staff. The project seeks to evaluate the current state of conservation and preservation in the United States and the future of activities to care for both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The project has a wide-ranging [advisory council](#) and a [steering committee](#) drawn from a broad base of conservators and non-conservators. Pamela Hatchfield serves as the project coordinator and FAIC Outreach Coordinator Katelin Lee is the project assistant. [Nine major topics areas](#) provide a broad overview of the field and demonstrate intersections with the broader cultural heritage community and society.

Pourchot encouraged attendees to share information about *Held in Trust* as well as engaging with posts on the discussion forum. There will also be several events, including a program at the Annual Meeting prior to the Opening General Session, and a National Convening in Washington, DC, in the fall of 2022. This will be followed by a written report that will be published in 2023, as part of the semi-quincentennial celebrations of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The findings of *Held in Trust* will also inform AIC and FAIC's strategic planning processes.

Transition Planning

Wentworth thanked those she had worked with on the AIC and FAIC boards, staff members, contract workers, volunteers, funders, donors, colleagues, and allied organizations over the past 17 years. She expressed her confidence in the future of the organization, citing the groundwork that has been laid for both organizations to take advantage of new opportunities. Wentworth spoke about the work and thought that had gone into strengthening and building policy, procedures, bylaws, fiscal oversight, and staff, as well as changes over her tenure, including moving offices twice and building a separate FAIC board. She also acknowledged many significant programs and initiatives, including: the Mellon-funded Hermitage Project, emergency response in Haiti and following Hurricane Sandy, taking on programs and staff from Heritage Preservation, the Comprehensive Organizational Health Initiative (COHI), working with the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) on Connecting to Collections Care and the Collections Assessment for Preservation program, developing the Cultural Heritage Fund, and *Held in Trust*. She also thanked those on helping with the transition process, including the boards, search committee, and Emig, who is stepping into the role of Acting Executive Director.

Davis thanked Wentworth, acknowledging her impact on the organizations. The attendees also expressed their thanks for her service as Executive Director.

Re-envisioning AIC

Launching the strategic planning process, Davis asked attendees prior to the meeting for their thoughts on two questions, “What makes AIC special?” and “If you could change one thing about AIC that would make it a better place for everyone, what would that be?” She found several themes in the responses:

AIC is special because:

- it is a very welcoming, caring, and collaborative community
- it is a strong and active community that takes actions to solve problems
- it connects professionals with diverse experience
- it fosters learning, development, and continual expansion of knowledge
- it has a highly dedicated professional staff and committed volunteers
- it values outreach and advocacy

Changes respondents would like to see in AIC:

- Increase transparency about officer elections, appointments made to non-elected roles, and information that might otherwise only be available to senior leadership
- Improve organizational culture, diversify both boards, incorporate a DEIA focus into every aspect of the organization, address financial challenges to volunteering, improve professional communications in online communities, increase focus on kindness and acknowledging existing work, create welcoming spaces for new members
- Development of resources for outreach and advocacy, to help members communicate with media, the general public, and funders

- Provide a virtual option for all future Annual Meetings, make recordings of sessions available online, publish postprints from the general sessions

Attendees were then asked to consider two additional questions, “What do you find intriguing or exciting about reflecting on AIC’s core values and examining its strategic priorities?” and “In 5 years, what are the key values you would like to be able to use in describing AIC to colleagues, students, and the public?”

Some of the themes and comments that attendees discussed included:

- Reviewing and expanding organizational core values and reviewing core documents
- Creating and reinforcing a positive organizational culture
- Supporting and expanding DEIA efforts at all levels within the organization
- Improving outreach and advocacy within the field and to the public
- Meeting the challenges of climate change and improving sustainability in conservation
- Supporting emerging professionals
- Engaging membership and exploring a person-centric model of community care

2021 and 2022 Annual Meetings and 2023 Annual Meeting Themes

Corina Rogge, AIC Vice President, asked attendees for their thoughts on potential future Annual Meeting themes. Some ideas included the changing role of collections care, collaborative initiatives with allied professionals, and climate change and sustainability. Members will be able to weigh in on meeting themes for the 2023 Annual Meeting via an online poll.

Ruth Seyler, AIC Meetings & Advocacy Director provided an update on planning for future meetings. She thanked everyone involved with the abstract selection process for the 2022 meeting, noting that there were more than 400 abstracts submitted, the third highest number of submissions ever. Prospective attendees can find information about the meeting schedule, vaccination policies, and updates on the [AIC site](#).

Seyler pointed out that 2022 will be AIC’s first annual meeting to have a virtual component in addition to the in-person sessions. The virtual component to the meeting this year will serve as a pilot, testing demand for live-streaming sessions concurrent with the meeting versus watching recorded sessions after the fact. The recordings will also be available to all in-person attendees, allowing attendees to view multiple sessions scheduled during the same time. Roughly one-third of all in-person talks will be offered in the virtual package. The program committees will select which talks are streamed and recorded. Recordings will be closed-captioned, and livestreams will be closed-captioned up to 100% based on needs of attendees. The 2022 virtual component will need to meet an attendance minimum to move forward.

The 2023 Annual Meeting will take place in Jacksonville, Florida, (rescheduled from 2021) and the 2024 Annual Meeting will take place in Salt Lake City, Utah (rescheduled from 2020). The 2022 and 2023 meetings will provide a sense of attendance rates at future meetings and inform city selection for 2025.