

INTERNAL ADVISORY GROUP (IAG) MEETING WASHINGTON, DC

1 December 2017

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

Call to Order & Introductions

AIC Board President Margaret Holben Ellis called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. Attendees were recognized for their commitment to AIC and thanked for attending. Ellis emphasized the importance of attendees conveying AIC business back to their constituencies. She introduced the theme of the meeting, which is communications, including communication tools that are and will be available to members. Communication of responsibilities of volunteer leadership, increasing awareness of existing resources, and collaboration were stressed as key aspects to AIC's success.

All IAG attendees introduced themselves and volunteer leadership discussed their goals in the context of their current role. Many of the goals echoed the overall theme of communications and included:

- Increasing AIC's web content and making it more accessible
- Supporting membership initiatives, including improving diversity and inclusion within the field and collaboration with allied professionals
- Creating and maintaining better documentation of responsibilities and practices
- Improving the visibility of conservation within allied fields and among the public

Ellis acknowledged these themes and their connections to the planned discussions and programming for the meeting.

Improving Communication Tools to Achieve Member Goals

Brenda Bernier, AIC Board Director, Communications, and Bonnie Naugle, Communications & Membership Director, introduced AIC's new communication tool, Higher Logic. Bernier stated that the primary function of AIC is communications – communication with each other, allied professionals, and the public. AIC uses a variety of venues to disseminate information, including *AIC News*, the wiki, the blog, *JAIC*, forums, social media, advocacy alerts, workshops, and the annual meeting. These platforms are provided by the organization but are only vehicles. The content comes from the membership. She also added that communication is made possible by volunteer leaders and staff.

In order to see what priorities membership would value most, a survey was created and shared with the attendees prior to the meeting. The same question was asked from three different perspectives – what are your communications needs? Attendees were instructed to consider their needs as an individual member, a volunteer leader, and for the organization as a whole.

On an individual level, respondents' first priority was organizing website and web content to make it more useful and accessible. Their second priority was developing better online forums for members. Other priorities included increasing public outreach to non-conservators, increasing publications and outlets for research, and developing more resources. As volunteer leaders, their first priorities were increasing volunteer resources and reorganizing web content. Other priorities included increasing AIC's publications and outlets for research, followed by developing online forums and learning about existing platforms and resources. On an organizational level, the first priority was increasing public outreach to non-conservators, then developing better online forums for members, followed by reorganizing web content, increasing advocacy, and increasing publications and outlets for research.

While the ranking of their prioritization shifted depending on the viewpoint being assumed, the answers selected were very consistent and indicated a clear desire to improve accessibility of our existing content and properties. Increasing publications and providing methods for members to share their research was

also a high priority. Additionally, outreach and advocacy for the field were important communications priorities.

With these priorities in mind, Bernier and Naugle discussed a powerful new tool AIC will be utilizing to address concerns about our existing platforms and expand our capacity. Higher Logic is a cloud-based community platform, which will take on functions of the DistList and other listservs and replace MemberFuse. The new platform will add significant functionality, including capacity to add resource libraries, make communities for specialties and topics in conservation, and increase collaboration between members and with allied professionals. The community can be easily customized, and content can have variable levels of access depending on membership status, encouraging visitors to join AIC. This will be an integrated platform that can be used for project management and volunteer leadership needs as well. Developing the community will require input from members, particularly volunteer leadership. The community is not designed to replace the AIC website or the specialty group subsites, but instead to host resources and member communications in one primary location.

Work will begin in January and the community is scheduled to be launched prior to the Annual Meeting.

Membership Committee and its Working Groups – Update and Discussion

Sue Murphy, Board Secretary and Membership Committee Liaison, provided an introduction and context for the necessity of the working groups. The AIC bylaws strictly lay out the purpose and composition of the Membership Committee and as such, must focus on the peer-review process. It cannot explore other topics of interest to the membership. To address significant topics of interest to members, the board created the Equity and Inclusion Working Group and Membership Designation Working Group, both of which have a set time frame to complete their given charge.

The Membership Committee has a new [charge](#) and [guidelines](#), which can be found on AIC's site. There have been questions about the peer-review process and there are many common misconceptions, so members are encouraged to review the documents that guide the committee.

Cathy Hawks, Coordinator, Membership Initiatives, spoke on behalf of the Membership Committee chair, Karen Pavelka, who could not attend. The Membership Committee has continued in their role in the peer-review process, including the recent approval of two fellows and eleven PAs. The committee also asked the AIC board to approve a mechanism to approve adjunct reviewers as subject matter experts. Since the size of the committee itself is very limited by the bylaws, the committee wanted a way to bring in additional expertise. Initially, each SG chair will act as the adjunct reviewer to represent their area of expertise. If, for whatever reason, the chair is unable to serve as their SG's reviewer, another representative will be appointed by the chair of the SG. The committee chair will contact a specialty group chair, or specified representative, when an adjunct reviewer is needed. The committee is also working with staff and the board to promote recognition of peer-reviewed members and celebrate their achievements.

Jennifer Hain Teper, Equity & Inclusion Working Group (EIWG) Chair, began the presentation of the working group's findings by thanking the working group members. She provided background on AIC's previous efforts in this area but stated that programmatic change was necessary moving forward. As of December 1, the working group's one-year charge is completed, with a report to the board as the primary deliverable of the charge. The working group was also asked to create a [statement on equity and inclusion](#), which was approved by the board and added to AIC's core values. Teper added that the statement should impact all future strategic planning and that the working group's report will serve as a map for future efforts. The report will be shared with AIC membership following board discussion and comments.

The working group performed extensive research and interviewed peer organizations, members, and staff to inform their report. The report's recommendations are framed in four large targets, with both short- and long-term goals. Teper also emphasized that while the short-term goals may be achievable within 1-5 years, there is not an "end" to these efforts. In summary,

- Target 1: Develop internal engagement and education
- Target 2: Build advocacy and partnerships with allied and international professionals

- Target 3: Recruitment and growth
- Target 4: Sustainability

The report also includes detailed information on past AIC efforts, the current state of the field and organization, initiatives from other organizations, and case studies and stakeholder interviews. There was additional discussion of current initiatives at Yale, Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC), the Smithsonian Institution, NYU, and UCLA.

Attendees also discussed potential fields that could provide an entry into conservation, increasing diversity. It was acknowledged that as the field expands, the collections and topics addressed by conservators are becoming more representative of diversity, but membership and the field as a whole have not shown an increase in diversity. The importance of intersectionality was emphasized, as well as AIC's responsibility to be a leader in promoting equity and inclusion.

Stephanie Lussier, Membership Designations Working Group (MDWG) Co-chair, provided important background on the development of the working group, which culminated in 2016 as a formal working group with a [charge](#). Both co-chairs of the group, Deborah Trupin and Stephanie Lussier, have recently cycled off the AIC board, having served as Director, Specialty Groups, and Education, respectively. The working group was careful to include members employed in a variety of settings, with diverse specialties. The group is charged with reviewing, evaluating, and generating a proposal to revise and strengthen member designations. The goal is to reflect the training and expertise of AIC's members and improve AIC's ability to promote its members and the field. A certification subgroup has been approved, but not staffed, and will research and assess the pros and cons of establishing a related program for AIC members.

The working group hopes to identify needs across the profession and has been working with different constituent groups to gain insight into ways member designations can benefit the field. The Education and Training Committee was approached about research on needs in professional development and continuing education. The Emerging Conservation Professionals Network (ECPN) was asked about ways member designation can support recent graduates. The group has also focused on identifying benefits of peer-reviewed status for allied professionals through the Collections Care Network (CCN). Discussion on MemberFuse regarding certification is also being considered. The working group is developing a member survey to be sent out to gather demographic data and better understand perceptions of our current peer-reviewed designations. The survey will attempt to identify what member needs and hopes are for member designations and will provide an opportunity for members to give their comments. There will be additional surveys to gauge member opinion, so it is essential that volunteer leadership encourage participation in all data gathering.

Following the survey, the MDWG will work with the Membership Committee to review the current peer-review process. The working group will seek to address previously voiced member concerns about a perceived lack of transparency in the process and hope to overcome member intimidation regarding applying. The diversification of the field, including taking on different positions and responsibilities, has created some concerns about qualifications for application. Lussier emphasized that all conservators should feel confident in applying for peer-review status, even if their current position does not involve treatment. She added that as membership demographics have changed, it is important to welcome all members, but the question then arose of how to evaluate training for these allied professionals. Members have also voiced concerns about evaluation of apprentice-trained conservation professionals, as that training pathway has become less common.

The new guidelines for the committee seek to address some of these concerns, focusing the committee's efforts on evaluation of the application, not necessarily the individual. Murphy added that the guidelines stress the responsibility of the sponsors to evaluate the qualifications of the applicant and that the sponsors serve as a resource for the committee. The new standing arrangement for adjunct reviewers is an additional response to member concerns. Attendees suggested that the application process could be made more efficient by posting a list of PAs and Fellows so that applicants could more easily find sponsors, and that more language be created to guide applicants and sponsors. A community in Higher Logic for members to discuss and ask questions about the process was also suggested.

Ellis further expressed her hope that the peer-review process would be expanded to reflect the growth of the profession and acknowledged the input given by the CCN. CCN leadership stated that if AIC seeks to expand membership into allied fields, there needs to be a “purposeful and logical place” for these professionals. The working group hopes to gauge the interest of allied professionals to determine if there is a significant group of members who would be interested in pursuing peer-review designations. Some aspects of these questions have also previously been discussed at the AIC member business meeting, particularly the necessity of creating additional types of designations and establishing criteria. There was a brief discussion of other professional organizations that have significant membership in allied fields and how AIC might choose to pursue those professionals for membership.

AIC and FAIC Financial Summary

Sarah Barack, AIC Board Treasurer, provided an update on AIC and FAIC’s financial activities. She discussed overall trends, providing an overview of the budget as well. AIC’s budget primarily consists of dues and annual meeting income, with operating expenses balancing income. The projected net loss for 2018 is almost exactly covered by specialty group reserves spending. AIC’s net assets are relatively stable but show the impacts of external factors, such as investment performance.

FAIC finances are strongly affected by multi-year grants, which are reported according to Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures (GAAP). GAAP requires that income is booked in the year in which a grant is awarded, no matter when the funds are expended. As such, while FAIC has a significant projected net loss, the majority is covered by previously booked grant income. A lack of unrestricted funds to provide overhead costs for grant-funded programming remains an issue. However, FAIC has been working with the Mellon on their Comprehensive Organizational Health Initiative (COHI) to improve the sustainability of FAIC’s finances. Eryl Wentworth, AIC and FAIC Executive Director, stressed the need for the donation of unrestricted funds to be able to continue delivering mission-driven programs. Roughly 8% of AIC members donate to FAIC, and while FAIC seeks to increase the percentage and amount of giving from membership, the FAIC board has also grown and is working to broaden our donor base.

Achieving Member Communication Goals

Furthering previous discussion of communications resources, attendees heard reports about AIC’s existing communications platforms and had opportunities to ask questions about their usage.

Lisa Goldberg, AIC News Editor, discussed some of the recent changes in AIC News, including the new layout, which was created in response to member feedback, gathered in a survey in 2016. The new format is easier to read online and provides more opportunities to feature members in images and in text. Goldberg put out a call for images to the attendees, asking for submissions of photographs related to the lead article in that issue. She thanked staff members Naugle and Carmina Lamare-Bertrand for their work. Additional changes include the migration of the calls for papers, conference listings, course listings, and lectures and workshops to webpages where they can be updated more frequently. There is also a new feature called “The Back Page,” which is focused on celebrating AIC and member accomplishments. It’s an open page, which can feature items related to the field or a specialty as well. Attendees were encouraged to reach out with ideas for content. There is still an ongoing initiative to archive back issues of AIC News online, which will likely be facilitated by Higher Logic.

JAIC Editor-in-Chief Julio del Hoyo-Meléndez discussed some recent trends in submissions and concerns from the editorial board. The number of submissions received is decreasing, however, the number of accepted articles is also decreasing. The editorial board is becoming increasingly selective about the articles that are accepted, which does maintain standards but makes it difficult to assemble a full issue. Turnaround time from submission to publication has decreased, but it is still taking a long time to get an issue to press. As of the IAG meeting, two issues had already been published, one in February and a special issue on collections care which was published in May. A new call for papers will be circulating shortly. Adding to the expertise of the editorial group, Brenna Campbell has been selected as a new associate editor for collections care and book and paper conservation and Cory Rogge will provide assistance on technical studies. The pre-session event at the Annual Meeting in Chicago was well attended, with more

than 100 participants. Having received positive feedback on the event, they hope to organize a similar session in Houston. Our publisher, Taylor and Francis, is offering free access to JAIC to ten universities in a new diversity initiative. Ways to improve submission rates were then discussed, with attendees expressing confusion over the submission guidelines, particularly if analysis is required for an article and whether or not postprints were eligible for inclusion in JAIC. Postprints are eligible for inclusion and JAIC editors attend the meeting and advise on presentations that could be successful articles. It was suggested that submission guidelines could be clarified on AIC's site and through an AIC News article. Concerns were also raised about the time commitment required to submit an article and complete the review process. The JAIC editorial team is working to get article into publication faster and are seeking shorter technical notes and reviews.

Rachael Arenstein, AIC E-editor, discussed her role as E-editor, including developing content for our online platforms, providing feedback to staff, and testing new products and platforms. Arenstein also highlighted the work of Matt Morgan, AIC's Digital Strategies Advocate and recommended attendees read his report, which focused on our different digital platforms and their use. Some of the highpoints of member engagement with our platforms include members blogging about annual meeting programming and our annual January Wiki Edit-a-thon. She added that while there are not a lot of comments on our blog, Conservators Converse, there is still significant viewership, and it is an opportunity for members to directly post content. Attendees suggested ways they could create additional opportunities for members to use these platforms, including making blogging part of scholarship and grant activities. There has been a significant increase in annual meeting programming and those posts remain very popular, increasing traffic to the blog. Other online properties are more focused, such as Storage Techniques for Art, Science & History (STASH), some with a very external focus, such as Connecting to Collections Care (C2C Care). Arenstein encouraged attendees to find the platform that is right for their group and users, while acknowledging concerns that had been voiced about the extent of information available on sites such as the Wiki.

Katelin Lee, Membership & Marketing Associate, spoke to AIC's social media presence, including which platforms are used and public engagement on the different platforms. She thanked all staff members and attendees who have provided content for use and stressed that a majority of AIC's social media followers are not conservation professionals or even members. As such, our public facing social media accounts need to provide accessible, regular content that helps the public better understand conservation. By sharing content on personal pages, AIC can then share those posts, crediting the member and ensuring consistency. She provided statistics on AIC's growth on the four principal social media platforms used, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube. Additionally, Lee said that it was important to make sure all aspects of the field were represented and to make a particular effort to recognize the work of members who feel like they may not have the resources to do so on their own. As AIC has an engaged and interested base of followers, it is essential to educate and encourage non-conservation professionals to be advocates for the field. She encouraged all attendees and members to, whenever possible, submit information about their projects for use on social media.

Bernier concluded by encouraging attendees to consider what information and resources they use most frequently and how they access that information. A major communications priority will be consolidating existing resources and promoting them, which will help determine future needs and projects.

The Foundation

Eric Pourchot, FAIC Institutional Advancement Director, provided context for FAIC's recent growth, as the full-time staff number has dramatically increased since 2001, when Pourchot came onboard. Following the close of Heritage Preservation and FAIC adopting many of its programs, there are now four full-time staff members, with four more staff members who either are part-time or share their time with AIC. The presentation given by FAIC staff members was a "fact or fiction" game designed to dispel some common misconceptions about FAIC.

The presentation covered the following topics:

- FAIC is not solely grant funded. In addition to grants, there are other types of income, including in-kind donations of space, time, donations, sales, and contracts.
- In 2017, FAIC awarded over 93 scholarships, totaling \$278,981.
- AIC member dues do not go to funding FAIC, which is why FAIC also needs support through donations. AIC members receive discounts on FAIC programming in recognition of the volunteer work performed by members, organizers, and instructors.
- The majority of CAP assessments were performed by conservators in private practice, with only 5 performed by regional conservation centers. Additionally, while FAIC provides a list of approved assessors, the institution selects the conservator themselves.
- National Heritage Responders (NHR) are volunteers. They are not paid for their time. FAIC provides supplies and reimbursements for travel and expenses only.
- C2C Care is not designed to replace consultation with a conservator, it is providing collections care information to help small- and mid-size institutions who don't have the money to have a conservator on staff. C2C Care tries to give them information that is appropriate and meets their needs.
- FAIC scholarship applications are evaluated based on posted criteria and reviewer forms use the exact same criteria. It can help to be a PA or Fellow, but that's explicitly noted if that's the case.
- AIC members have input on FAIC programs in many ways: our emergency programs benefit from the expertise of AIC members on protecting collections that are damaged, and AIC members are NHR team members and are on the Emergency Committee and its working group. Professional development programs work closely with the Education & Training Committee (ETC) to look for needs in the field and for members' needs. They are always open to accept proposals for scholarships and topics – all programming is based on member requests and interest. C2C Care has an active advisory group including members from CCN and affiliated groups. The CAP program's steering committee involves AIC members and the Small Museum Association and receives feedback from AIC members on ideas about the program and suggested changes.

AIC and FAIC Executive Director Eryl Wentworth thanked attendees who came to the previous evening's Open House, which was also attended by DC-area members. The office relocation earlier in the fall came following the end of AIC and FAIC's ten-year lease in our previous building. There was an extensive search for the new office space, which resulted in committing to our new building, which is owned by a non-profit organization that only rents to non-profits. We pay below market rent and we rent onsite storage space at a greatly reduced rate. Wentworth emphasized that members are always welcome to visit the AIC offices.

Annual Meeting Themes & Planning

Suzanne Davis, AIC Board Vice President, solicited response to a variety of potential meeting themes for the New England meeting in 2019. Identifying several themes that attendees across specialties were interested in, Davis and Meetings and Advocacy Director Ruth Seyler will survey membership to determine the theme for the next annual meeting.

Seyler began by providing context for selecting a meeting location, as AIC's annual meeting has a specific set of challenges in booking the meeting. Given the size of the meeting and how much space is used due to concurrent sessions, less than 1% of all hotels and convention centers can meet our needs. The pool is further limited by a venue's willingness to take a group that requests a large amount of meeting space, compared to what the hotel can expect in room nights booked and food and beverage consumed. This limits the ability to negotiate pricing and contracts. Our strong performance in Chicago and in Montreal has helped to open possible venues in new cities. This illustrates the importance of booking accommodations in the meeting room block.

The 2019 meeting will be truly regional – a greater New England meeting. Tours, workshops, and pre- and post-sessions will take place in multiple cities, including Boston, New York, and New Haven, as well as potentially Providence or Newport. The decision to book at the Mohegan Sun allows AIC to have the

meeting in an area easily accessible to many members and will allow for a more inclusive meeting, due to lower room costs and lower travel costs for many. Additionally, there are special lower rates for students, encouraging participation among emerging conservation professionals. While the hotel also has a casino, attendees do not have to enter it at all to access meeting rooms or sleeping rooms. The hotel is owned by the Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut, not a corporation. Seyler stressed the importance of trying different venues and occasionally attempting a different meeting model to help include people who have felt like they have been excluded from attending in the past.

Looking ahead to the 2020 annual meeting, she acknowledged increasing concerns about social and political impacts and how that affects the selection of meeting locations. Cities being considered for the meeting include Buffalo, Salt Lake City, Atlanta, Calgary, Pasadena, St. Louis, and Cincinnati. While some of the cities regularly submit promising proposals to host the meeting, such as Atlanta and St. Louis, some cities offer a spectacular, once-in-a-decade bid. The bid from Salt Lake City falls into this category, with the offer of the convention center and room blocks at four hotels in immediate proximity, offering a variety of price points. A compelling bid was also provided by Buffalo, as it would fall in conjunction with the anniversary of the Buffalo State program, however, there are concerns about its convention center and its location immediately following the 2019 New England meeting. Holding the meeting there would not encourage geographic diversity. Additional cities were suggested by attendees and were discussed as well.

While the planning of the 2018 Houston meeting was impacted by Hurricane Harvey, the area around the hotel and museums was not that badly damaged. As early as October, meetings were being held in the convention center. There are still many people who need help, but the meeting will be able to go forward. Seyler is working with local institutions to organize an Angels Project, which may be held at the Printing Museum. The museum has reopened, but many artifacts were affected.

Wrap-up

Ellis summarized the meeting's events, stating that volunteer leadership had become better acquainted with each other, our communications properties and goals were discussed, the Membership Committee and its working groups summarized their upcoming goals and plans, some FAIC myths were dispelled, and attendees were able to look ahead to 2020. She also encouraged attendees to recognize their peers, particularly through nominating them for an award, and to feel free to contact board members directly, as well as staff, with questions and ideas. The meeting was adjourned at 3:42.