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AMERICAN
INSTITUTE FOR
CONSERVATION
OF HISTORIC AND
ARTISTIC WORKS

AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC & ARTISTIC WORKS (AIC)

***JANUARY 1, 2013 – DECEMBER 31, 2015
STRATEGIC PLAN***

Approved by the AIC Board of Directors

1 November 2012

Introduction

The American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works (AIC) was incorporated in December 1972 as an organization exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue tax code. It is a national membership organization representing the multi-faceted conservation profession. AIC is the sole member of the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works (FAIC).

Development of the current AIC plan was assisted in large part by the work of the AIC Board of Directors undertaken at an August 9-12, 2012 retreat held jointly with the FAIC Board of Directors and benefiting from the perspectives of the members of both boards, AIC and FAIC staff members, and strategic planning consultant, Robert Berendt.

During the retreat, time was taken to review the structure, operations, and finances of both organizations so that board members could reflect on AIC and FAIC missions and goals, along with their similarities and differences. As the FAIC board is being expanded to include a greater number of non-conservators, it is particularly important for all board members to understand how the two organizations work together and support each other.

A review of the AIC and FAIC 2010-2012 Strategic Plans focused on major accomplishments, deferred activities, and unexpected occurrences that affected work plans over the past three years. Board and staff members then assessed the impact and implications of these accomplishments and revisions on the next strategic planning cycle. Included in the 2010-2012 plans was a situation analysis of the environment in which AIC and FAIC work. This, too, was reviewed and discussion revolved around what has remained the same and what new influences on the work environment have taken place in recent years. Following wide-ranging discussion about the opportunities and challenges facing AIC, the board and staff confirmed the priorities that will serve as a guide in the coming years. These priorities are reflected in the AIC 2013-2015 Strategic Plan that follows.

The AIC Strategic Plan incorporates both existing programs and services and new initiatives. An annual status review of activities in relation to the strategic plan will be prepared by staff and presented to the board.

Mission Statement *(revised and approved 8/13/04)*

The American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works (AIC) is the national membership organization supporting conservation professionals in preserving cultural heritage by establishing and upholding professional standards, promoting research and publications, providing educational opportunities, and fostering the exchange of knowledge among conservators, allied professionals, and the public.

Vision Statement *(approved 11/18/04)*

AIC envisions a world in which the preservation of cultural material is appreciated and supported, thereby encouraging knowledge and understanding of our cultural heritage.

Core Values *(approved 11/18/04)*

Preservation of Cultural Heritage

AIC promotes the preservation of cultural heritage as a means toward a deeper understanding of our shared humanity—the need to express ourselves through creative achievement in the arts, literature, architecture, sciences, and technology. We honor the history and integrity of achievements in the humanities and science through the preservation of cultural materials for future generations.

Advocacy

AIC is the voice for cultural materials preservation. We advocate for public policy founded on the enduring evidence of human imagination, creativity, and achievement.

Professionalism

AIC supports the provision of conservation services by professionally qualified individuals who adhere to a code of ethics and guidelines for practice.

Education and Lifelong Learning

AIC promotes the attainment of expert knowledge of materials and technologies and mastery of conservation techniques. We promote the understanding of the values and contexts of our cultural heritage and stress informed decision-making in conservation. We are dedicated to service to the field, research, sharing knowledge with others, and continued education.

Member Services

AIC welcomes any individual, organization, or institution to become a member. We encourage education and networking for professionals, allied professionals, and individuals interested in supporting conservation. We provide and develop services that are responsive to the professional needs of our members.

Governance

AIC embraces sustained, strategic management of our organization, reflecting our responsibilities to our membership, allied professions, partners, the public, and our cultural heritage preservation agenda.

Situation Analysis

The following observations, trends, developments, and indicators drawn from the summit discussions and related activities serve to describe key considerations that are likely to influence AIC's direction and success over the next three years.

THE ECONOMY AND SUPPORT FOR CONSERVATION

- The outlook for the national economy continues to point to uncertainty and, at best, a very slow recovery. This is certain to influence conservation practice in all settings.
- Employment opportunities have diminished as a consequence of the economy. More training in business and marketing skills will be needed as more conservators enter private practice.
- A limited universe of private foundations support conservation education, research, and practice, and they will continue to adjust their priorities and giving patterns based upon their individual areas of interest.

NEED AND DEMAND FOR CONSERVATION SERVICES

- The need and demand for conservation services will continue to outstrip resources available to support the delivery of these services.
- The growing and changing impact of emerging technologies—particularly the internet—and expectations for instant access to information will continue to be a growing force for conservators, their clients, the institutions they serve, and the public-at-large whose tax dollars and contributions underwrite history, art, and cultural organizations. “Digital Museums” will gain even more traction.
- Training programs in conservation are flourishing.

AWARENESS

- Public awareness of conservation is gradually expanding, in part due to increasingly informed coverage by the press and a greater use of technology and social media showing conservation activities in labs and in communities.
- Awareness and appreciation of conservation is lacking among many leaders of art, science, and humanities institutions, including some that maintain conservation departments.
- The general public is misguided by the perception that conservation practice is limited to major art museums.

INTERNAL FACTORS

- Conservators in many specialty areas characterize the profession as having made many advances (principally as the result of the application of new and emerging technologies), but also claim that the profession suffers from a sense of disparity between institutional and private conservators and a disconnect between those who have been trained in a program versus those who are apprentice trained.
- Conservation departments are being pressured to increase production rather than to engage in research and study.
- There is a recognized need among conservators for a cross-disciplinary approach and recognition of the importance of new, expanded alliances.
- While the Foundation has operated for more than thirty years, its operations, purposes, and priorities are not particularly well understood in the conservation community, even within the ranks of AIC. Those features that distinguish FAIC from AIC appear to be a particular source of internal confusion.

2013-2015 Goals and Strategies

All the goals below reflect agreed on priorities for AIC, and the order in which they are listed in the strategic plan does not indicate a greater or lesser level of importance.

Goal I

Enhance Member Services

As a professional membership organization defined by the tax code 501(c)6, AIC's primary function is to serve its membership. Conservation professionals form the core of AIC and have a major influence on its direction, goals, and activities. AIC members serve in specialty groups and networks, on committees and task forces, and elect AIC's board. AIC members also contribute content for workshops, the annual meeting, and publications. In support of its members, for whom AIC exists, AIC will continue to enhance membership benefits and services.

Strategies

- Continue to increase membership through retention efforts and broadening AIC's membership base, with the knowledge that outreach to young conservators and related professionals is increasingly important as long-term, dedicated members begin to retire.
- Review membership categories and names of categories with the goal of promoting membership to allied and affiliate professionals.
- Strengthen peer-reviewed membership categories. Create and implement enhanced peer-reviewed categories to promote professional growth. Promote the value of Professional Associate and Fellow membership internally and externally by articulating and disseminating what it means to be a professional conservator.
- Continue to foster coordination and collaboration between staff and the specialty groups.
- Support the new category of AIC Networks and consider new Networks.
- Continue to refine and enhance communications with members regarding AIC and FAIC activities by assessing each tool/method and how each can be used most effectively.
- Continue to explore benefits programs that will aid AIC members, including those that will foster member-to-member communication.
- Enhance governance and other opportunities for meaningful volunteer participation.

Goal II

Maintain the Fiscal Health of the Organization

AIC needs a strong financial base to effectively serve its membership. It will establish a long-term financial plan and collaborate closely with FAIC.

Strategies

- Continue to develop additional AIC revenue sources, including through marketing activities for additional sponsorships, Web advertising, and publication sales.
- Continue to review effectiveness of annual meeting structure and costs as the external and internal environment changes. Develop options to be considered for meetings four to ten years in the future.
- Develop tools and marketing methodologies that will aid in the retention and/or increase of the membership base.
- Continue to update the Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual as necessary.

Goal III

Create an Advocacy Program

With federal and state support decreasing with each year and threats to even the existence of federal granting agencies, it has become critical that AIC devote additional resources to a strategic advocacy effort. The goal is to support the work of AIC members as well as to ensure the long-term care of the world's cultural heritage.

Strategies

- Outline a plan of action in creating and launching an advocacy program, within the legal framework allowed by 501(c)6 organizations, and determine the leaders in creating such a program.
- Develop a three-year budget to create and launch an advocacy program.
- Develop, as part of AIC's branding campaign (Goal V), short, compelling messages and conservation stories that can influence those in Congress, with the goal of creating a packet of information for AIC members and staff.
- Educate and support AIC members in advocacy efforts.

Goal IV

Provide Educational Opportunities to Advance the Field of Conservation

The AIC, working with the FAIC Professional Development program, will review the educational opportunities available within the field and work toward developing, expanding, and supporting such opportunities. The AIC and FAIC will continue to refine and expand their professional development programs to serve AIC members and to

attract other professionals involved in the care of cultural heritage. Also see separate FAIC Strategic Plan for Professional Development.

Strategies

- Continue ongoing evaluation of current continuing educational opportunities, such as the AIC Annual Meeting; evaluate needs for additional programs; and develop, implement, and support programs that enable members to remain informed of recent advances in the care of cultural heritage.
- Work with FAIC to provide quality conservation education opportunities nationally with an emphasis on mid-level professional development.
- Develop and support high quality training methods utilizing advanced educational tools and pedagogy to broaden accessibility to participants in a cost-effective manner, such as web seminars to communicate new conservation ideas and techniques.
- Continue to develop partnerships, leveraging resources to achieve maximum impact of education programming through collaborations with other organizations and institutions.

Goal V

Continue to Increase Outreach Activities

AIC seeks to increase appreciation and understanding of conservation and preservation beyond conservation professionals and to strengthen its presence in the allied professions. AIC will explore ways, in coordination with FAIC, to provide educational opportunities targeted to this goal.

Strategies

- Continue to develop outreach activities for allied professionals and the public.
- Continue to assess our external communications tools/methods and refine them.
- Provide AIC members with additional materials to conduct outreach as part of a “branding” campaign about what it means to be a professional conservator.
- Position AIC and FAIC, according to our strengths, in national and international emergency response efforts for cultural heritage. Continue to work in cooperation with other international, national, and state emergency response organizations and funding agencies to address deployment issues.
- Encourage and support member participation in outreach activities through a standardized procedure for providing financial support and organizational endorsement to these programs.

- Continue to strengthen collaborative relationships with allied organizations to increase stature in the arts and humanities community.
- In conjunction with FAIC, advocate for the field with the goal of garnering increased support in the private sector.
- Participate in national efforts to shape policy and programs that strengthen conservation of cultural heritage.

Goal VI

Increase AIC Information Resources

High quality AIC publications in both print and electronic format are critical to effectively serve AIC's membership, attract new members, and maintain credibility in the field and with the general public. AIC will continue to improve its publications through regular review and adherence to policies that provide consistency, assure quality, and maintain standards.

Strategies

- Continue to create, enhance, and maintain electronic and print information resources to serve a broader conservation community, allied professionals, and the public. Ensure that the website is upgraded to a better content management system with functionality such as discussion forums.
- Support the publishing efforts of the specialty groups with advice and coordination as requested.
- Support publication for development and outreach for AIC activities and in conjunction with FAIC.
- Support FAIC efforts to develop and maintain CoOL.
- Develop methods to increase networking opportunities among conservators and allied professionals.
- Improve ability to use membership database to offer member-only resources and additional online capabilities, including online membership directory and electronic delivery of the AIC News.
- Create maintenance and upgrade plan for electronic resources (wikis, etc.)

Goal VII

Develop and Promote Professional Standards for Members

As the profession of conservation evolves, the AIC Code of Ethics, Guidelines for Practice, and Commentaries to the Guidelines for Practice become increasingly important

documents for the profession of conservation and the broader cultural community. Establishing standards that both define and guide the field of conservation encourages professional growth and assures a major role for conservators in efforts to preserve cultural material.

Strategies

- Update the *Guidelines* and *Commentaries* as required through the development of “Best Practices” documents.
- Create guidelines for developing “Best Practices” documents that will provide guidance to members regarding changes in the field.
- Heighten awareness of sustainability in all conservation practices.
- Develop position statements, as necessary, to reinforce AIC’s mission and goals as they relate to issues impacting the field and provide these position statements to the public, allied professionals, and decision-makers.