

SHAFR Council meeting
June 8, 2023 via Zoom, noon-4 p.m. US Eastern

Present: Mary Ann Heiss, chair; Shaun Armstead, Laura Belmonte, Megan Black, Emily Conroy-Krutz, Sarah Miller-Davenport, Jessica Gienow-Hecht, Gretchen Heefner, Daniel Immerwahr, Mitch Lerner, Andrew Preston, Vanessa Walker, Molly Wood, Kelsey Zavelo

Attending: Amy Sayward (ex officio), Faith Bagley, Elizabeth Ferguson, Anne Foster, Petra Goedde, Jeannette Jones, Kaete O'Connell, Jason Parker

Introductory matters

SHAFR President Ann Heiss started the meeting. Amy Sayward reviewed motions passed by email:

- Approval of January 2023 Council minutes
- Approval of Ohio State/Columbus as the host of the 2026 SHAFR Conference
- Unanimous approval of "Recommendations for Reform of Executive Order on National Security Information Policy"
- Unanimous approval of AHA statement opposing Florida House bill 999

Sayward also reviewed Council's resolution of thanks for the service of the following retiring committee/task force members, noting with admiration SHAFR members' willingness to donate their time to the organization:

- Jeannette Eileen Jones, Program Committee Chair
- Jason Parker, Program Committee Chair
- Miguel Bandeira Jéronimo, Program Committee
- Nemata Amelia Ibitayo Blyden, Program Committee
- Brian Clardy, Program Committee
- Jeff Crean, Program Committee
- Andrew DeRoche, Program Committee
- Carolyn Eisenberg, Program Committee
- David Ekbladh, Program Committee
- Thomas Field, Program Committee
- Jacob Hamblin, Program Committee
- Kimberly D. Hill, Program Committee
- Margaret Huettl, Program Committee
- Christopher J. Lee, Program Committee
- S. R. Joey Long, Program Committee
- Amanda McVety, Program Committee
- Arwen P. Mohun, Program Committee
- Aaron Coy Moulton, Program Committee
- Stephen Tuffnell, Program Committee
- Laura Belmonte, Ways & Means Committee Chair
- David Engerman, Ways & Means Committee
- Daniel Margolies, Development Committee Chair

- Shaun Armstead, Graduate Student Committee Chair
- Dexter Fergie, Graduate Student Committee
- Gretchen Heefner, Stuart L. Bernath Book Prize Committee Chair
- Alex Beasley, Stuart L. Bernath Scholarly Article Prize Committee Chair
- Megan Threlkeld, Dissertation Prize Committee Chair
- Sarah Snyder, Robert H. Ferrell Book Prize Committee Chair
- Bernadette Whelan, Robert H. Ferrell Book Prize Committee
- Melvyn Leffler, Peter L. Hahn Distinguished Service Award Committee Chair
- Max Paul Friedman, Michael H. Hunt Prize Committee Chair
- Lucy Salyer, Myrna Berthan Award Committee Chair
- Tore Olsson, Marilyn B. Young Dissertation Completion Fellowship Committee Chair
- Amy Offner, National Coalition for History Delegate
- Matt Connelly, Task Force on Advocacy Chair
- John McNay, Task Force on Advocacy
- Amy Offner, Task Force on Advocacy
- Cindy Ewing, Task Force on Advocacy
- Sam Lebovic, Task Force on Advocacy
- Karma Palzom, Task Force on Advocacy
- Yael Schacher, Task Force on Advocacy
- Brian Cuddy, Task Force on Internationalization Chair
- Sean Fear, Task Force on Internationalization Chair
- Jessica Gienow-Hecht, Task Force on Internationalization
- Hideaki Kami, Task Force on Internationalization
- Carlo Patti, Task Force on Internationalization
- Vanni Pettina, Task Force on Internationalization
- Doug Rossinow, Task Force on Internationalization
- Jayita Sarkar, Task Force on Internationalization

Conference matters

Sayward brought forward the issue of having to distribute the awards traditionally given in January even though SHAFR Council voted to discontinue the luncheon at the American Historical Association. Sayward said that the awards would still be disbursed in January but celebrated at the June conference. She suggested either having a free-standing awards ceremony at the June conference or splitting the announcements between the two luncheons at the conference. Council members suggested ways to make the awards ceremony more efficient so as not to impinge unnecessarily on the time allotted for the Presidential and Bernath addresses—specifically having a single person narrate the awards and having the photographs taken after the luncheon with the committee chair and President. These ideas will be implemented at the June 2024 conference, which will be the first to feature the Bernath Lecture as the second luncheon speaker.

Jason Parker and Jeannette Eileen Jones (Program Committee Chairs) and Kaete O’Connell (SHAFR’s Conference Coordinator) joined the meeting to give updates on the 2023 conference. Parker gave an overview of their goals: to make this conference the most “graduate student friendly” SHAFR conference ever, to develop connections with additional institutions (also setting relationships for future

work), and to bring back previous SHAFR members as well as attracting new ones, especially from the DC area. Jones added that they also wanted to reach out to smaller institutions to continue growing the SHAFR community. One of the Program Committee's unfulfilled goals this year was to have more African participation, but a combination of the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD) annual conference meeting in Ghana this summer and strained financial resources thwarted that plan. However, she did indicate a desire to more deeply and consistently engage the graduate students and faculty of Howard University in SHAFR, especially in the years when the conference is in DC. O'Connell updated Council on the conference numbers: more than \$26,000 in sponsorships, 436 currently registered (with traditional DC conference having a total of 475-535 participants), and over 100 tickets sold for both the presidential and keynote luncheons--with about fifteen gifted tickets to be raffled to graduate students. Thanks to generous sponsorships, the cost of graduate student tickets for the cruise social event was able to stay at \$25, and baseball tickets have sold out. Issues that O'Connell noted for Council's consideration are the many late cancellations by program participants (errata sheet is at two pages) and the cost of AV services at the hotel—with just three rooms outfitted with a projector the cost for the coming conference is over \$40,000. Sayward expressed her thanks for the amount of fundraising done by the Program Committee Chairs, which was especially notable since this work has not traditionally been done for DC conferences. Parker and Jones then left the meeting.

O'Connell then gave updates on the 2024 conference in Toronto. She had recently met with the Local Arrangements Committee (Carol Chin, Tim Sayle, and Cindy Ewing) to discuss venues and accommodations. Potential hurdles for the upcoming conference include that the campus is spread out, which may cause some transportation issues, especially as the conference sessions and luncheons cannot be held in the same building. She was happy to report that conference-goers will have three different housing options at different price points: nice dormitory accommodations with shared bathrooms for \$50 per night, rooms at Kimpton hotel across from campus (less than a ten-minute walk), and rooms at the Sheraton, closer to downtown, which requires use of the Metro. The opening plenary and welcome reception will be in Hart Hall, which is a very nice campus location. O'Connell then left the meeting.

Sayward then provided information about the plans and contracts for conferences from 2025 through 2027, emphasizing the financial costs for the 2025 and 2027 hotel conferences as well as the generous monetary contribution that Ohio State campus partners have already made to hosting the 2026 conference. She suggested that campus conferences may be financially more sustainable following 2027, especially in light of both AV costs and service charges. Others highlighted that campus conferences require campus partners willing and able to partner with SHAFR to mount such a conference. Jessica Gienow-Hecht asked about the possibility of a Europe-based SHAFR Conference. Sayward provided insight based on the Cologne-based conference proposal from several years back, identifying previous Council concerns with the difficulty of scheduling what is traditionally a late June conference when European universities are still in session, a different model/timeline for reserving European hotel spaces, and increased travel costs for most SHAFR participants. However, she stated that questions about exhibitors might be lessened by the fact that many publishers now use the conference primarily for networking rather than selling books (which is more complicated for U.S.-based publishers in a non-U.S. space). Sayward concluded that a Europe-based conference was a possibility.

Financial matters

Sayward presented her mid-fiscal year financial report with proposed budget for the 2023-24 fiscal year. She explained that she had listed expenses up to the end of May and the approved budget but also what she expected the fiscal year's expenditures to be, which is challenging when SHAFR's largest expenditure (the conference) has not yet occurred. She highlighted the parts of the budget that would be affected in the future by decisions before Council at this meeting as well as changes made in line with recent Council decisions. She pointed out that a relatively small deficit was expected for both this fiscal year as well as next fiscal year, which was something that Council needed to consider in making its decisions later in the agenda.

Mitch Lerner then gave an update on SHAFR's investment portfolio based on a meeting with the TIAA endowment manager and David Engerman, SHAFR's endowment liaison on the Ways & Means Committee. He stated that the meeting had alleviated some of his previous operational concerns but had raised additional procedural matters that will be discussed with Ways & Means. He stated that Council may have to make a decision about whether it wants to more closely manage and oversee the TIAA investment decisions made for the endowment.

Laura Belmonte, chair of the Ways & Means Committee, then provided Council with the recommendations of that committee. She pointed out that Council had voted in 2020 to raise membership rates but did not enact that decision due to the pandemic. At this point, Ways & Means recommends that Council adopt a substantive membership increase for regular membership from \$60 to \$90—while maintaining the reduced and student membership rates as they are. Ways & Means also recommended an increase in regular conference rates from \$100 to \$140—again maintaining the rate for graduate students and those who are precariously employed. She pointed out that the Conference Committee had provided a chart comparing SHAFR's membership and conference rates to other, similar organizations, showing that SHAFR's rates were currently among the lowest and that even the increase would put SHAFR rates in the lower range compared to similar organizations. The extra revenue generated (projected at about \$20,000) won't solve all of SHAFR's financial issues, but it is a start in the right direction.

Andrew Preston pointed out that the projected revenue depends on the assumption that all members will remain in the organization, paying the higher rate, despite the fact that some may choose to drop their membership and/or conference participation, especially in light of historic inflation rates and reduced university funding opportunities. Sayward reported that SHAFR has been able to maintain a relatively high membership mark that was established when the 2021 virtual conference was available free to members. Heiss stated that the present proposal shows a commitment to nurturing new scholars while also accounting for the increase in expenses that SHAFR is already seeing. It was also suggested that SHAFR might consider increasing its endowment draw from the current conservative policy of drawing no more than 3% per year to a slightly larger percentage to meet current and future needs. Belmonte also added that after the 2027 conference (which is already under contract), Virginia Tech might be able to offer a campus conference model for SHAFR, with only the need to contract hotel rooms. The motion from Ways & Means to increase the membership rate passed by a vote of 12-0-1; and the motion to increase conference registration rates passed by a vote of 13-0-0.

The second recommendation from Ways & Means was to support the proposal from the Committee on Women in SHAFR to host an annual book workshop that would be offered in-person and virtually in alternating years, providing small stipends to the mentors. Council voted 13-0-0 in favor of this motion.

Publication matters

Council then reviewed the written reports provided by the editors of *Passport* and *The SHAFR Guide*. No action was requested or taken on these reports before Council members took a break.

Following the break, Council was joined by the editors of *Diplomatic History*, Petra Goedde and Anne Foster. Goedde reviewed highlights from their written report, specifically the continuing high quality of articles and submissions (especially from abroad) and the resolution of production issues that had previously been reported. Submissions coming from abroad that are not primarily English-speaking still have lower rates of acceptance, but there has been a larger number of submissions coming on pre-1945 topics. There has been a decline in the overall number of submissions (likely connected to the pandemic), and the proportion of women authors is still too low. All of this highlights the need to continue to be proactive in recruiting submissions and having roundtables in process should additional content be needed.

Discussion then turned to the process of renewal for the editors. Sayward reminded Council that its practice is to review the editors in year four (now) in order to decide whether or not to continue the editors for an additional five-year term. Goedde and Foster stated that they had started negotiations with their institutions, which both indicated conditional willingness to continue serving as the home to the *Diplomatic History* editorial offices. They had provided a proposal to Council for continuing that included their editorial vision and their proposal to maintain the current structure of the editorial office. Their biggest concern was the increased institutional expenses, including the increased cost for editorial assistants at Temple under their new contract. Goedde did state that Temple saw the value in housing the journal.

Heiss then turned discussion to the suggestions from the editors about the newest appointments to the editorial board. There was some discussion of the need for international members, especially given the rising number of non-U.S. submissions. The set of proposed editorial board nominees passed 13-0-0.

Elizabeth Ferguson from Oxford University Press then joined Council. Since Oxford's contract is also up for renewal, she highlighted potential terms for the contract renewal with Oxford. She noted the rise in prices caused by inflation, which has impacted library budgets and other revenue. Oxford is anticipating that an increase in costs of 15% for this year as well as an increase in open access, which impacts how subscriptions are sold and total revenues. One change that Oxford had already proposed was a shift to a fixed rate of increase for office support rather than the current connection to the CPI (consumer price index). Although Oxford had earlier suggested the possibility of an increased subscription rate for SHAFR members, they are now thinking about a different price structure, which would only charge those requesting paper copies of the journal. Another possibility would be to shift from a guaranteed minimum royalty for the journal to a profit-sharing arrangement.

Ferguson also shared that Oxford is developing a system to start tracking some demographic information (disaggregated from authors), which will help journals understand gaps in their recruited authors. Ferguson, Foster, and Goedde then left the meeting.

Sayward highlighted for Council that SHAFR is now facing potentially higher editorial office expenses and lower revenue from Oxford. The Oxford contract is set to expire at the end of 2024, but it requires one year's notice of non-renewal. The last time that Council sought a publisher, two people were appointed to negotiate and bring the offer back to Council, and Heiss intends to follow a similar procedure moving forward. A Council member asked how we could learn if there were better offers, and Sayward explained that a request for proposals (RFP) would have to be issued first. Council also discussed the question of an additional cost for print copies of the journal and whether or not that would hurt our membership numbers. Sayward suggested that since half of membership does not currently request a print copy, SHAFR might pay the total cost as it currently does. Council members also expressed concern about the significant increase in operational costs for the current editorial set-up and discussed potential ways to trim costs, including publishing one fewer issue per year. Consensus was that Council needs to have a solid proposal as soon as possible from Oxford in order to make its decisions. To that end, Molly Wood moved and Vanessa Walker seconded a motion to empower the President to obtain from Oxford a solid proposal no later than August 1st that will serve as the basis of Council's decision at its September meeting; the motion passed 13-0-1.

Discussion then turned to the Electronic Communications Co-Editors' report. Council's initial two-year commitment to this position will end with this calendar year, so Council had been provided with the initial MOA. Sayward highlighted that they have worked well within the podcast budget provided by Council and were moving forward on the website redesign (copy of contract provided to Council), but other areas have not seen much advancement, specifically electronic programming and appointments to their editorial board. Council members believed that this matter was best considered at its September meeting, when other budgetary and editorial decisions will be made, along with a proposal from the current co-editors about their vision for moving forward. Sayward explained that the ADA accessibility guidelines for websites had been provided to Council for their information and to the web redesigner for implementation within the bounds of the MemberClicks website.

Committee and director reports

Sayward reviewed the IT Director's report, specifically the question of cyber insurance, which had been prompted by a disclaimer on SHAFR's annual policy that cyber insurance was not included. Although MemberClicks and Payscape are the home of SHAFR members' data, Council has not talked through what its liability might be in case of a breach of either. Council requested additional information for its January meeting.

Kelsey Zavelo and Shaun Armstead gave an oral report from the Graduate Student Committee. They reported on their work and presentations related to the impact of COVID on graduate programs as well as their work with the Program Committee Chairs to make this year's conference the most "grad-friendly" SHAFR conference ever—including a book raffle, tote bags, and coffee vouchers. Current projects include organizing a series of virtual townhalls for graduate students throughout the year and meeting with the co-chairs of the Development Committee to see how graduate student ideas might be prioritized within the work of the committee, including enhancing the dissertation

completion fellowship yearly amount, restoring the second dissertation completion fellowship, and expanding the parameters of research fellowships. Council suggested that future book raffles might include books donated by members and prize-winning books donated by the press.

Sayward reviewed for Council the suggestions from the Committee on Access, Representation, and Equity (CARE) provided in a Zoom call ahead of Council. One concrete suggestion was providing the ability in MemberClicks for a member to purchase a membership for someone else. There was general consensus that this should be set up ahead of the next renewal cycle.

Heiss then highlighted issues with the future of the Task Force on Advocacy and the Task Force on Internationalization, both of which are scheduled to expire at the end of this calendar year. The Task Force on Advocacy was created to advocate for additional resources for NARA (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration), but the one proposal that it sent to the membership was not connected to NARA but to broader federal expenditure questions. There also have not been reports from this task force provided to Council for the past two cycles. The Task Force on Internationalization, however, has assembled a survey (which Council reviewed), and it seems logical that this task force would move forward with suggestions based on the data collected from the survey.

Sayward reviewed the Executive Director transition timeline and process, emphasizing that a new director would take charge on August 1, 2025. In her report, she recommended having a person in place by the summer of 2024 so they could work with her to learn the job and have a longer transition period than she enjoyed.

Heiss then reviewed Amy Offner's report on the work of the National Coalition for History, which was much more optimistic than earlier reports. The NCH has responded to some of SHAFR's promptings for change by creating a working group on NARA. Offner will be stepping down this year, but Tom Zeiler has agreed to replace her.

Council matters

Heiss asked Council members about their preferred format for the SHAFR Council gathering at the upcoming conference. In January, Council had voted to keep its meetings virtual but to have a face-to-face gathering in June in order to better get to know one another. It was decided that no substantive decisions would be made, since not everyone can participate.

The final discussion topic was the electronic programming throughout the year that Council had endorsed last year but that had not yet taken form. Heiss looked forward to some programming based on the report of the Graduate Student Committee and the initial indication from the Electronic Communication Co-Editors. She also suggested roundtables connected to significant anniversaries. Council members were requested to provide further suggestions.

There being no new business, the meeting adjourned at 4:05 pm (U.S. Eastern time).