

# SHAFR Council Meeting

Wednesday, June 27, 2012 - 8:00am-12:45pm

Hartford Marriott Downtown

## Meeting Minutes

**Council Members Present:** Laura Belmonte, Mark Bradley, Carol Chin, Frank Costigliola, Christopher Dietrich, Mary Dudziak, Peter L. Hahn, Mitchell Lerner, Andrew Preston, Andrew Rotter, Marc Selverstone, Sarah Snyder, Annessa Stagner, Tom Zeiler (Presiding)

**Others Present:** Matt Ambrose, Kristin Hoganson, Andrew Johns, Chester Pach, Jennifer Walton

### **Business Items:**

1. Announcements Zeiler called the meeting to order at 8:07 AM, welcoming the council and inviting them to introduce themselves.
2. Recap of motions passed by e-mail since January meeting Hahn reported that Council, since its last meeting in January, approved two motions by e-mail ballots: 1) to approve the minutes from the January Council meeting, and 2) to approve Lexington, Kentucky as the site of the 2014 SHAFR conference.
3. Report from the Ways & Means Committee Rotter, standing in for Marilyn Young, reported three items from the Ways and Means Committee: A) Endowment Management Rotter summarized a report prepared by Endowment Liaison and W&M member Emily Rosenberg on SHAFR's current endowment managers' fee structure and on the possibilities of adopting an investment framework emphasizing socially responsible investment strategies. The Rosenberg report compared fee structures among three firms and presented possibilities for negotiating reduced fee structures as part of a management arrangement. As the

report recommended, Council agreed to hold in abeyance the possibility of dealing with the largest prospective firm on the reasoning that it would lack local service representation and that its fees were not advantageous. The current investment strategy is relatively conservative, but Rosenberg and the committee noted that comparable organizations such as AHA are actually even more conservative. While a look at the most recent historical data shows that this slightly more aggressive allocation has seemed to generally pay off, Council may want to consider a shift in strategy to slightly more conservative allocations. Based on information from SHAFR's CPA, Rotter reported that socially responsible strategies can limit options, and exist on a spectrum from more to less restrictive, and therefore need to be defined clearly. The committee concluded that further investigation into these details was merited, to see what such a strategy would look like, options within that framework, and how the SHAFR portfolio would have done with such a strategy in the past and potentially in the future. After discussion, members agreed that the W&M Committee should explore the precise definition of socially responsible investing and assess its pros and cons.

B) Budget issues Rotter reported that the W&M Committee anticipated a decline in revenue in the near future. W&M had discussed possible cuts in expenditures to offset the expected revenue shortfall. However, the committee reached a consensus that it would be premature to make spending cuts in light of the growth in the Endowment and the possibility that revenue shortfalls might not materialize on the worst-case scale. Rotter reported that the committee recommended that Council could continue spending at current rates, rely on the endowment earnings as a cushion to cover any shortfall, and monitor actual revenues for 1-2 years before making any major spending cuts. After discussion of specific figures for the endowment and publishing revenues, Council concurred on the utility of postponing major reassessments of spending until conditions under the new contract were better understood.

C) Internship proposal Rotter reported on the proposal, raised at a past meeting, to fund an internship at the Woodrow Wilson Center at \$5,000 per year. Belmonte said that her inclination was to wait a year and see how SHAFR's finances develop, so that

any commitment made to the program could be enduring. This suggestion met with general approval, and no action was taken.

4. SHAFR events at OAH annual meetings Bradley recommended that SHAFR move the Bernath Lecture luncheon from the OAH to the AHA in light of the high attendance at SHAFR events at the AHA and low attendance at those events at the OAH. Because speakers have been scheduled for 2013, he recommended that this change take effect in 2014. To offset the loss of SHAFR presence at the OAH, Bradley proposed that SHAFR presidents proactively schedule an academic panel or two at the OAH. Discussion ensued on whether the luncheon would remain a part of the Bernath lecture and whether to try to boost turnout for the Bernath at OAH or to simply boost visibility at OAH through other events. Dudziak suggested that SHAFR should try to increase its visibility at OAH through panels rather than social events, citing the military history lectures at the AHA, which are well attended. Chin stated that the point of the Bernath lecture is to celebrate colleagues, but if it became another panel, the calculus for attendance changes. General agreement was expressed with the principle that the president should implement the recommended shift of the Bernath Lecture to the AHA beginning in 2014.
5. Report of Website Task Force Dudziak reported several recommendations from the Website Task Force (Belmonte, Dudziak, Selverstone, Stagner): 1) a resolution to thank Brian Etheridge for his service and support with the website to date. 2) appointment of a new webmaster. 3) creation of a standing committee on the SHAFR website, with responsibility to oversee SHAFR's website and other web-based programs and to advise the webmaster. 4) allocation of sufficient resources to redesign the SHAFR website and compensate the new webmaster. Dudziak proposed that Council first appoint a new webmaster, who could then work with the committee to conduct the redesign. Discussion ensued on the appropriate level of compensation for the webmaster and a consensus emerged that \$5,000 per year would be appropriate for planning purposes. Belmonte emphasized the need to ensure coordination between the web committee and the teaching,

program, and conference committees. It was suggested that Council consider hiring a company to manage the website, noting SHAFR members might not have the technical expertise needed to keep the website at the level SHAFR is looking for, but a consensus emerged that having a webmaster who understood SHAFR's mission and values was crucial and that a redesign firm could also train the webmaster to handle the technical challenges. Dudziak indicated these issues would be addressed during the webmaster bidding process. Dudziak moved a resolution of thanks to Brian Etheridge for his service as SHAFR's webmaster. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Dudziak then moved to create a standing committee on SHAFR's web presence; the motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Dudziak then moved to appropriate \$15,000, \$5,000 (recurring) for the webmaster, and \$10,000 (once) to spend on web design, at the discretion of the committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

6. SHAFR *Guide to the Literature* and contract with ABC-Clio Zeiler noted that the survey on the *Guide to the Literature* had a low response rate. Zeiler also reported on some difficulties with ABC-Clio posting updates, making the electronic version available, and shipping volumes. Zeiler asked Council if the commercial model for the *Guide* should continue. Dudziak stated that if she could just get to the *Guide* from the web with a single click she would use it. Selverstone stated that in the event of a move away from ABC-Clio, the *Guide* could have a SHAFR domain name. Hahn and Zeiler noted the expense of maintaining the *Guide* and the difficulty identifying chapter editors. Dudziak suggested switching to a wiki-based model instead, perhaps open-source but restricted to SHAFR members. Zeiler agreed this was an idea worth investigating. Hahn agreed to investigate what options were permitted in the *Guide* contract.
7. Discussion of authority of Nominating Committee Rotter noted that there had been some question recently about the weight the Nominating Committee gives to the raw number of received nominations for specific individuals vis-à-vis other factors. Rotter reported that a Nominating Committee member indicated that the committee takes into account many other factors including CV, contributions to the literature,

and diversity. Discussion ensued on how much weight the raw number factor was perceived to hold among the membership at large and on the potential impact on the process of submitting one's name for nomination. While the discussion noted the importance of transparency and equity, Council decided that, as the bylaws render the SHAFR Council and the Nominating Committee independent of each other, any action or further discussion on this question was outside the scope of Council's immediate responsibilities.

8. Discussion of venues for 2015 and 2016 annual meetings Zeiler reported that the 2015 annual meeting would be in Washington and that a search would be conducted for the 2016 venue. He indicated that San Diego remained a possibility, although there was evidence that it would be more expensive than other options, and that there was considerable support for a West Coast venue. Zeiler favored an overseas option like Havana, although this option would be contingent on diplomatic and political events. Costigliola asked if the DC hotel 2015 would be the same as 2013. Hahn replied that a competitive search would be conducted after the 2013 meeting.
9. Motion to merge the Diversity & International grants program and the SHAFR Global Scholars Grant program Zeiler reported on the progress of the new SHAFR Global Scholars Grant to bring in international scholars to the 2012 meeting. One is composed of global scholars. The main problem in the SGSG program is that persons not awarded funds were unaware of the Diversity & International program. Hahn reported that this year while the popularity of the Diversity & International grants program had flagged in recent years, in 2012 the entire \$25,000 had been allocated (about \$20,000 by the Program Committee and about \$5,000 by the Membership Committee). Hahn recommended that the two committees streamline communication to ensure consistency between the programs. Snyder stated that she supported such a streamlining effort. Zeiler recommended against combining the programs, as there were elements of specific recognition and achievement in the SGSG program that D&I might not be able to completely capture. He recommended preserving the current division and improving coordination,

communication, and timing. After some discussion, Council agreed to keep the programs separate and improve coordination. Zeiler planned to discuss the situation with the Program Committee. Costigliola then moved to re-authorize the D&I grants program for an additional four years (2013-2016) at \$25,000 per year. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

10. Motion to clarify stipulations on dissertation prize competitions Hahn noted that the Dissertation Prize Committee asked for clarity on the stipulations regarding the date of a dissertation that affected a candidate's eligibility for the dissertation prizes. As Hahn suggested, Belmonte moved that for the Oxford University Press USA Dissertation Prize in International History and the Betty M. Unterberger Dissertation Prize competitions, *the year in which a doctoral degree is awarded* shall be operative in determining the eligibility of a dissertation. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously with none abstaining.
11. *Diplomatic History* editorial succession Bradley reported that he would oversee the process voted by Council last year to conduct a review of proposals to edit *Diplomatic History* after the expiration of the current editorial assignment in August 2014. He planned to appoint an ad-hoc committee of 5 people, representing the various constituencies of SHAFR, and ask it to explore the experience of other societies conducting a review in early 2013. He envisioned the committee extending a call for applications in early 2013, evaluating those applications in the spring, and bringing a recommendation to Council in June 2013. While Bradley would be unable formally to create the committee until January, he intended to lay some preliminary groundwork to that this timetable could be followed. Reports
12. *Passport* Johns reported that the transition of the editorship from Mitch Lerner to himself had gone well. Johns stated that Lerner had been very effective as consulting editor, and expressed his hope that Council would allow Lerner to stay on in that role, largely because most of the infrastructure for *Passport* is still at Ohio State. *Passport* is stable on financial grounds, with Mershon Center grants

forthcoming. Oxford will pay for the publication and mailing of *Passport* as Wiley-Blackwell has. In terms of content, there have been few changes.

13. *Diplomatic History* Zeiler reported that *DH's* acceptance rates are up .5 percent, but that the absolute level is still about the same as rates at the *American Historical Review* and the *Journal of American History*. Costigliola asked if Robert Schulzinger had expressed any interest in continuing with *DH* in any capacity. Zeiler replied that Schulzinger would retire. Zeiler noted that Oxford's very strong international imprint might mean that article downloads would increase above their already strong numbers. Zeiler also highlighted *DH's* continuing efforts to improve the gender balance and maintain the presence of international scholars. Zeiler has appointed Ken Osgood to head up *DH's* web presence and initiatives.
14. Teaching Committee Pach reported that the committee was moving ahead with updating syllabi and getting documents on the website. The lesson plan project would be delayed until Fall. In discussion about other initiatives from the State Department and Miller Center on historical documents, Pach stated that the committee was discussing whether the primary source initiative might be duplicative and in what form it would continue if at all, particularly in view of any changes to SHAFR's web presence policies. He will keep Council apprised of deliberations on the subject.
15. 2012 SHAFR Conference Hoganson reported that the 2012 Program Committee has 62 panel slots to fill, a smaller number than in years past. The acceptance rate was 57% of individuals and 67% of full panel proposals. Hoganson recommended several reforms of the on-line application process to avoid problems encountered this year. To address the problem that applicants could not save their applications in progress, the Program Committee should post an application template that allows saving in progress or should alert applicants to gather all needed materials before starting. Hoganson also recommended automating the separation of individual applications and the transfer of information from applications to the spreadsheets; centralizing the grants process by creating a single form that allows users to check boxes for all funds they wish to apply for; and automating the

dispatch of confirmation letters. Hoganson also recommended consistency and transparency in the allocation of funds from the global scholars program. Hoganson reported that the \$500 initially allocated to pay the RA who assisted with applications proved to be insufficient and that the Program Committee was pleased to have an additional sum allocated. Zeiler agreed to look into software vendors that provide services capable of this level of automation without requiring it to be integrated into the website manually. The long-term management of this process would be assigned to the new webmaster. Walton reported that registrations likely will run between 350 and 400 for this conference, an excellent number. She also noted other positive trends, such as increased international registrants and advertising revenue. AV expenses continue to run high, affirming the wisdom of concentrating AV panels into single rooms and denying belated requests for AV support. As suggested by someone, Walton agreed to research a fee structure for one day registration at future meetings for local non-academics such as K-12 teachers. Council indicated favor for the idea of offering the student discounted rates for all conference activities to K-12 teachers as well as adjunct professors.

16. 2013 SHAFR Conference Bradley reported that Lien-Hang Nguyen and Paul Chamberlin will co-chair the 2013 Program Committee. A conference theme is pending. The plenary, which George Herring will chair, will feature 18th and 19th century historians in conversation with 20th century historians about topical and methodological connections over time. Tim Naftali will lecture at the Saturday lunch, focusing on his experiences as director of the Nixon library. Bradley plans to schedule the social event on Friday night in lieu of a second plenary, in hope of increasing participation at the social. He is investigating possible venues including museums and historical sites. Some discussion ensued of potential benefits and drawbacks to this approach. Bradley noted that the 2013 conference will provide a good opportunity to experiment with a new schedule.

17. 2014 SHAFR Conference Zeiler reported that the 2014 conference will be held at Lexington, Kentucky and will most likely find a way to honor George Herring.



18. 2012 Summer Institute Costigliola reported that he and co-director Andy Rotter received 50-60 applicants and accepted 12 (8 women and 4 men). Ten of the twelve attended. The Institute was an intense, wonderful learning experience. Rotter stated that the informal evaluations indicated universal acclaim for the opportunities to discuss each other's work. All planned to attend the current SHAFR conference, buoyed by the confidence of entering the meeting with a network of colleagues from the Institute. Costigliola added that the Institute thus served as a great recruiting tool.
19. 2013 Summer Institute Zeiler reported that the SI Oversight Committee approved a proposal to host the 2013 SI from Leopoldo Nuti, Martin Sherwin, and Christian Ostermann. The SI will focus on "The International History of Nuclear Weapons": and will be hosted at the Wilson Center in Washington in the week preceding the SHAFR conference. Hahn noted that the 2013 proposal was the first one selected through a competitive process, and that only the one proposal had been received. He also noted that Council would need to extend the authority to hold SIs in 2014 and beyond if indeed it wanted the program to continue. Costigliola recommended renewing the program for 6 additional years, through 2019, noting that assurance of continuity in this program would generate abiding interest and additional proposals to host it in the future. Rotter so moved, the motion was seconded, and it passed unanimously.
20. Reports on recent prizes and fellowships Hahn reported that Sara Fieldston and David Wight will receive Dissertation Completion Fellowships in 2012-2013; that Toshihiro Higuchi will receive the 2012 Oxford University Press USA Dissertation Prize in International History; and that Melvyn Leffler will receive the 2012 Norman & Laura Graebner Lifetime Achievement Award. John Gaddis, who was unable to attend the OAH in April where it was announced that he won the Robert Ferrell Book Prize, will physically receive the award at the Saturday luncheon just before he delivers the keynote address. Gaddis graciously declined the prize money, returning it as a donation to SHAFR in honor of Robert Ferrell.

21. Concluding remarks Zeiler thanked all in attendance and wished them an enjoyable conference. The meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Peter L. Hahn Executive Director PLH/ma