

SHAFR Council Meeting

4 January 2020, 8 AM - 12:10 PM

Sheraton New York Times Square, Carnegie East Room
New York, New York

Meeting Minutes

This meeting was held in accordance with SHAFR by-laws.

Council members present: Kristin Hoganson (presiding), Vivien Chang, Mary Dudziak, Peter Hahn, Andrew Johns, Barbara Keys, Adriane Lentz-Smith, Kyle Longley, Lien-Hang Nguyen, Andrew Preston, Kelly Shannon, Lauren Turek, and Karine Walther.

Council members absent: Brian McNamara

Also Attending: Anne Foster, Petra Goedde, Jeanna Kinnebrew, Antonina Javier, Amy Sayward (ex officio), and Patricia Thomas.

Introductory discussion:

Kristin Hoganson called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM, followed by introductions, and moved a resolution of thanks to retiring Council members Matthew Connelly, David Engerman, Julia Irwin, and Kathryn Statler and committee chairs and members whose terms ended in December 2019: Ellen Wu (Committee on Minority Historians); Ilaria Scaglia (Chair) and Astrid Mignon Kirchhof (Committee on Women in SHAFR); Cindy Ewing (Graduate Student Committee); Hal Friedman and Katharina Rietzler (Membership Committee); James Graham Wilson (Chair) and Micki Kaufman (Web Committee); Brian Etheridge (Chair), Kariann Yokota, James Siekmeier, Carl Watts, Kelly Shannon, and Silke Victoria Zoller (Teaching Committee); and Laura Belmonte (Nominating Committee). The resolution passed unanimously after being seconded by Kyle Longley.

Hoganson affirmed that any votes taken by email between meetings (only on urgent matters) would be affirmed in face-to-face meetings in order to comply with regulations

in the State of Pennsylvania, where SHAFR is incorporated. Amy Sayward reviewed the votes taken between meetings, which included approval of the June 2019 Council minutes, approval of editorial board appointments, and a reciprocal discount with the American Foreign Service Association. Mary Dudziak moved that Council reaffirm the votes taken by email; the motion was seconded by Kelly Shannon and passed unanimously.

Report related to sexual harassment/misconduct at 2019 SHAFR

Conference:

Per SHAFR policy, Sayward briefed Council on code of conduct adherence, stating that no reports of sexual misconduct or harassment were received from the annual SHAFR conference in June 2019. Hoganson reminded Council that the task force is becoming a regular body, with further reports on its work coming later in the meeting.

Financial issues:

Sayward reviewed the financial reports provided ahead of time to the Council as well as providing an overview of the three reports to Council members. She noted that while SHAFR had earned less than projected in the 2018-19 fiscal year (1 November 2018 through 31 October 2019), it had also spent less than projected and ended the fiscal year in the black, thanks in part of the signing bonus provided by Oxford University Press (OUP). This surplus should cover the deficit projected for the current 2019-20 fiscal year. She also noted that this past fiscal year saw SHAFR depositing funds into the General Endowment for the Hunt Prize in International History.

In reviewing the long-term budget projections sheet, Council observed that the decrease in journal royalties was the main reason for projected future deficits, with the need for a website overhaul also being a significant future expense in FY 2020-21. Peter Hahn asked what the plan was to weather the upcoming deficits. Sayward referenced upcoming reports from the Ways & Means and Development committees, noting that one way to address the decreased revenue from the journal would be to

increase membership fees, which are separated from the journal subscription in the current contract with OUP.

Sayward noted that the detailed budget report before them—including its estimates, which tended to be on the conservative side—was a relatively recent development, created when David Engerman was SHAFR President. Similarly, the endowment spending rule (drawing no more than 3% of the three-year average value of the endowment) was on the conservative side, compared, for example, to universities' endowment draw rules.

Barbara Keys, chair of the Ways & Means Committee, stated that the committee was recommending to Council that it consider reducing the average subsidy to the annual conference from approximately \$70,000 to approximately \$50,000 moving forward, which would be similar to previous Council guidance provided to conference planners on how to manage the costs of the social event. She noted that this reduction in the organizational subsidy to the conference could be achieved by raising conference registration fees and/or reducing conference expenditures. The committee believed that if approved this target should be implemented starting with the upcoming 2020 conference. The proposal, having been made by Ways & Means, did not require a second; Council voted 11-0-2 to have conference organizers aim to reduce the annual SHAFR conference subsidy to a target of no more than \$50,000 per year.

There was extensive Council discussion in line with the previous recommendation on whether an increase in conference registration fees would be fixed or within a range (and therefore variable from year to year based on projected conference expenses). Hahn made a motion to increase the regular, early-bird conference registration rate up to \$120. Andrew Johns pointed out that such a motion could raise up to \$10,000 of additional revenue in meeting the goal of reducing the conference subsidy. Hahn revised his motion to authorize a registration rate increase up to \$140. The motion was seconded by Longley. Council voted 13-0-1—in favor of this motion.

The projected future deficits could also potentially be addressed by increasing the endowment draw from a maximum of 3%, with each additional percentage point

currently representing approximately \$15,000 per year. This is something that the Ways & Means Committee is currently studying.

The Executive Director's report recommended that the annual compensation for IT Director George Fujii be raised 5% in recognition of his excellent work and the upcoming work on the web redesign. Dudziak affirmed this judgment and made the motion to implement this, which was seconded by Adriane Lentz-Smith and approved unanimously by Council. Council deferred discussion of Conference Consultant Amanda Bundy's compensation until the June meeting.

Development Committee Report:

Council endorsed the recommendation of the Development Committee to add more donation opportunities to the SHAFR website and its proposal to make bigger donors a focus of its work in 2021.

Member Clicks:

Keys reported that the Ways & Means Committee had recommended the investment in this new business office software package, primarily due to its ability to alleviate a number of past membership issues—especially surveying the membership, addressing difficulties in renewing, and making it clear that people are joining SHAFR, which provides a subscription to *Diplomatic History* as one of multiple benefits. Both Shannon and Karine Walther affirmed that these would be significant advantages over the current system based on their experiences. Member Clicks should also provide a better platform for fund-raising moving forward, which could help offset its annual financial cost. Council recommended that the Development Committee's recommendations on fund-raising be built into the Member Clicks site (both conference registration and membership renewal).

Sayward updated her initial written report, as it had been discovered subsequently that SHAFR could not migrate its entire website free of charge to a Member Clicks platform, but she affirmed that such a move would still address a number of long-term membership issues and save significant time and effort by staff and SHAFR

committees, including through its review panel features. Hoganson pointed out that it would also give SHAFR additional capacities, such as the creation of internal listservs that some of the committees were interested to explore and the ability for members to quickly and easily opt in to the experts directory and manage their entries in this directory. Sayward also pointed out that using a single software package would also facilitate the transition to a new executive director in the future.

Keys pointed out that the Ways & Means Committee had recommended to Hoganson that she inquire whether OUP might compensate SHAFR for taking up this work, which is currently managed by OUP. There was also a short discussion of the fact that the de facto discount to customers who currently pay their membership dues in British pounds or Euros to OUP would end, as the Member Clicks system would require all to pay in U.S. dollars by credit card or check. Keys made a motion to adopt Member Clicks, Lentz-Smith seconded the motion, and Council unanimously approved it.

Membership fees:

Hoganson informed Council that OUP had inadvertently applied the increase in its institutional rate to individual membership rates and having been alerted to this mistake was working to redress the problem through refunds and correct charges moving forward.

A discussion of membership fees—tied to the discussion of SHAFR’s overall budget—ensued, which was informed by the report of the Membership Committee chaired by David Atkinson. That report suggested a wider range of membership rates tied to income (similar to the American Historical Association model). The Ways & Means Committee suggested a simpler model that maintained the cost of a student membership (\$20) and the reduced rate membership for those earning less than \$50,000/year (\$35), while raising the regular membership rate (from \$60 to \$70) and creating one additional, higher rate for those earning more than \$100,000/year (\$90). Sayward noted that having a lower number of rate categories might also encourage more donations to SHAFR with the move to including donation options as part of the membership process.

Although a final decision was not needed ahead of the June 2020 Council meeting, Council discussion moved toward affirmation of the Ways & Means Committee's recommendation. Longley moved to accept it; the motion was seconded by Walther. Discussion ensued about whether the by-laws needed amendment, but it was Council's consensus that they did not limit Council's ability to set different rates for regular membership, especially as Article I, Section 2 states that "specific qualifications of each class of membership shall be established by the Council." Council voted in favor of the motion, with one abstention (Johns, who abstained as a life member not affected by changes in membership fees). Keys said that the Ways & Means Committee will make a recommendation in June about the lifetime membership fee, as the current structure results in a net loss of funds to SHAFR over an average membership.

Crisis in Academia Task Force:

Keys reported that she had initiated the creation of a task force on the crisis in academia (approved by Council in June 2019), asking Michael Brenes and Daniel Bessner to chair the task force as an outgrowth of their article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* on the issue. In turn, they had suggested to Council the need to compensate the three contingent and precarious faculty who would serve on this committee.

Dudziak asked whether there might need to be income limits defined for the task force members who would receive honoraria. Hoganson raised the concern that there might be contingent faculty members serving on other SHAFR committees and that such a proposal might set a fiscally unsustainable precedent. Dudziak pointed out that the logic for funding this task force service (and not others) is that SHAFR cannot have this task force without contingent faculty participation, and developing policy to assist the precariat is vital to SHAFR as a whole. In this case, SHAFR is specifically asking for the labor of contingent members, which is not the case with other committees.

Hahn asked if there was reason to suspect that the task force would propose to SHAFR something different than its chairs had recommended to the American Historical Association (AHA). Keys responded that it was clear that SHAFR could not serve as a vehicle for collective action across the profession and that instead the June 2019 proposal to form this task force noted several specific, tangible ways in which the organization could assist those members of the precariat, such as access to research funding.

The Ways & Means Committee had suggested waiving membership, conference registration, and conference meal ticket fees as compensation. Lentz-Smith moved that Council approve the suggestion of Ways & Means, and Longley seconded the motion. In subsequent discussion, Andrew Preston suggested that this motion perhaps allocated the compensation to the wrong area; although what was required was committee members' time and effort, what was being primarily compensated was their conference attendance (which was not required by committee service). The motion did not pass, with two in favor, one abstention, and the remainder of Council voting no. In its place, another motion was made by Dudziak and seconded by Shannon to compensate contingent members of the committee with a \$500 honorarium and free SHAFR membership for one year (with the possibility of a second year at the President's discretion), contingent upon their service. Such compensation is not intended to set a precedent but to recognize the specific and special circumstances and needs of this committee. The vote in favor of the motion was 12-0-2.

2022 SHAFR Conference:

Council received proposals to host the 2022 SHAFR Conference in Cologne, College Station Texas, and Toronto. The hotel broker, Blue Janis, provided Council members with a report on potential conference hotels in each city. Hoganson noted that the specific hotel contract would be negotiated following Council's decision on a location. Council members pointed to the likelihood that the Cologne location would attract European members and those in relatively proximate areas. They commented favorably

on the significant price offsets of a campus-based conference, the proposal team, and the city. Concerns expressed included that exhibitors might not attend, that the relatively high cost of airfare from parts of the United States might preclude the attendance of others (especially U.S.-based contingent faculty and graduate students), that the Cologne hotels reserved the right to raise rates if trade fairs were scheduled at the time of the conference, and that the earlier date proposed to ensure access to campus facilities (thereby reducing costs) might reduce attendance. The Texas A&M proposal had the advantage of having a presidential library on site, having a large number of esteemed diplomatic historians in residence, and being a western location (SHAFR has met west of the Mississippi River just a handful of times), but it was not outside the continental United States (which Council had stated a preference for in the call for proposals) and posed travel challenges. After a wide-ranging discussion of relative advantages and disadvantages among the potential sites, Toronto was the top vote-getter in a straw poll of Council members.

Hahn initiated a discussion about whether SHAFR might partner with the Cologne proposers for a special topic conference or something similar to help build the organization's European connections short of a full conference. Preston thought that this was a potentially promising avenue, given that there had been ad hoc meetings of SHAFR historians in the UK for several years. There was general support for this proposal. Hahn made a motion that Council move forward with planning the 2022 SHAFR Conference in Toronto, with Cologne as a back-up in case Toronto plans cannot be finalized, and with a subsequent discussion with the Cologne proposal-makers on a SHAFR co-sponsored event. The motion was seconded by Longley and passed with one vote in opposition (Keys).

Diplomatic History:

Patricia Thomas and Antonina Javier of Oxford University Press (OUP) joined Council after a short break. Thomas apologized for the error in the membership rates that had been distributed to SHAFR members in late November, promised to refund and correct the inadvertent rate increase, and averred that only SHAFR Council can set

membership rates. Referring to the publisher's report circulated before the meeting, Thomas highlighted the stable circulation rates and good usage rates of *Diplomatic History*, with over 10,000 full-text downloads per month, which in turn influence libraries' decisions to renew their institutional subscriptions. She emphasized the long "shelf-life" of DH articles and praised the co-editors of the journal for their great production work that ensures that the journal is assembled and disseminated on time and even ahead of time. There was also a brief discussion about the changing contours of open access generally.

Hoganson asked whether OUP might compensate SHAFR for taking over the membership services (through Member Clicks) previously provided by Oxford. Thomas explained that those services were provided free of charge and therefore there would likely not be an offset. She affirmed that she would work with Sayward to ensure a smooth transition.

Javier talked about her work to drive usage and increase *Diplomatic History's* international profile. She noted that 2019 had seen a 19% increase in usage. She highlighted both the DH roundtable on the Ken Burns and Lynn Novick Vietnam War documentary (which resulted in 293 full-text downloads) and the cross-journal promotion on the topic "Outbreaks." She welcomes ideas for future promotions. Sayward suggested planning for the celebration of *Diplomatic History's* 50th anniversary in three years.

Diplomatic History co-editors Petra Goedde and Anne Foster next joined the Council meeting. They talked about the smooth editorial transition as well as the outstanding work of the assistant editors at Temple and Indiana State universities. Foster pointed out that the number of submissions had been stable for the past year, which was an improvement over the slight decreases of previous years that were likely the result of challenges facing the profession.

Hoganson asked about being under the page budget for the most recent volume in light of the fact that *Passport* will no longer be publishing stand-alone book reviews. Goedde responded that they were publishing some of the backlog of reviews and that

the editors had discussed the possibility of increasing the number of 1,200-word reviews by potentially three or four per issue (with a maximum of twelve). However, she noted that the journal's ability to review important works relies on reviewers completing their work in a timely manner and that the journal has a policy of not reviewing edited collections and synthetic works.

Task Force on Public Engagement:

Council considered a written report from Kelly McFarland and Kim Quinney, co-chairs of a task force on public engagement, which was an outgrowth of the public engagement workshops at the University of Virginia in 2017 and at Georgetown University in 2019. The task force recommended creation of a permanent standing Committee on Public Engagement with a designated slot in each year's conference program—similar to what the Teaching Committee and the Committee on Minority Historians currently have. Construing Public Engagement to mean conveying academic research to non-academics, the task force likewise recommended that the committee help SHAFR members engage with the public through means such as the SHAFR website, Twitter feed, Experts Directory, podcasts, a resource library, and training and workshops. Walther moved to accept the task force's recommendations to establish a Committee on Public Engagement. Preston seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Conference Conduct Task Force:

Shannon, referring to her written reports to Council, pointed out that the task force's mandate has now expanded beyond the SHAFR annual meeting to other events hosted by SHAFR, such as the upcoming second book workshop and summer institute. The task force is also considering possible future scenarios and how best to handle them as well as policies for membership revocation, appeal, and reinstatement. While there were no reports of misconduct at the last conference, Shannon reported receiving plentiful feedback from members, much of it pertaining to concern for ensuring fairness in the event of an accusation and establishing trust in the process

and procedures. She also explained that the task force would benefit from on-going interactions with the AHA and its affiliated societies that are also engaged in this work.

Open Access Task Force:

Longley reported on the recent establishment of an Open Access Task Force and the task force's consultations to date with Keys, Foster, Goedde, and affected scholars in Britain to learn about this unfolding issue. He pointed out that in the United States the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is currently considering applying open access requirements to anything published with NEH funds, but the challenge is where to obtain the fees most journals charge for various levels of open access publication. The task force will continue to monitor this issue.

SHAFR publications:

Council reviewed the publisher and editor reports for *The SHAFR Guide*. Sayward pointed out that the second on-line edition is scheduled for 2022, a launch date toward which Alan McPherson is working with contributors. She also pointed out that SHAFR IT Director Fujii reported relatively high usage rates, as this access is a SHAFR membership benefit. Hoganson reflected that Council will likely want to consider the future of the *Guide* following this edition. Dudziak supported this, pointing out that she had been part of the task force that previously considered the future of the *Guide*, which had recommended that SHAFR continue it in an on-line edition. The consensus was that a similar such task force should be established by 2021.

As Council moved to consideration of *Passport*, Johns recused himself from the discussion. Council considered the written reports from the editor and advisory board, with the former including the information that stand-alone book reviews would no longer be published in *Passport*. It then moved to consideration of a draft of a publishing agreement in line with the more formal memoranda of agreement recently developed for the editors of *Diplomatic History* and in line with those already extant for the executive director, conference consultant, and *Passport* assistant editor. The proposed agreement would put into writing Council's earlier action in renewing Johns'

term as editor, setting his compensation, and stipulating general terms and conditions. Concerns were expressed that there were some new elements in the proposed general terms and conditions and that there might be some areas of ambiguity between this and the conflict of interest policy also under consideration. After some discussion, Council's consensus was that there was not sufficient time to work through all of the issues related to the proposed general terms and conditions and that it desired the editor's input on this phrasing as well. Therefore, Lentz-Smith moved that Hoganson ask Johns to sign the publishing agreement stipulating the term, honorarium, exclusivity, and editorial structure but removing reference to general terms and conditions until they had been agreed upon by Council. Shannon seconded. Council unanimously approved.

Council composition:

Council received a proposal that originated in the Nominating and Teaching committees, which was signed by 35 SHAFR members, calling for the addition of a Council seat designated for a member from a teaching-focused position (analogous to the way in which two Council seats are currently reserved for graduate student representatives and similar to the governing structure of other organizations, such as the AHA and the Society for Military History). The Ways & Means Committee report expressed concern about the fiscal implications of an extra seat and noted that this impact could be reduced if one of the existing seats was instead converted. Dudziak suggested that one way of offsetting the fiscal impact would be to shorten the length of Council service of past presidents from three years to two years (for a total of four rather than five total years of service). Lien-Hang Nguyen also noted that the fiscal impact might ultimately be lessened based on the report of the task force she is chairing on remote participation, which intends to make recommendations to Council in June. Remote participation by Council members would have a greening effect, allow for greater diversity on Council, and lessen the fiscal impact of broader participation.

Keys noted that the Nominating Committee already has the capacity to establish a pairing on upcoming ballots that accomplishes this end should it choose to do so.

Sayward pointed out that a by-laws amendment would make this SHAFR policy rather than a matter of committee preference. Concerns were expressed that additional seats would lessen the ability of each Council member to weigh in on the discussion and make Council discussions more unwieldy. There was some discussion about the meaning of “teaching-focused positions.” As time was expiring and two Council members had to leave, Council tabled the decision until June.

Additional issues:

As Council’s meeting time was expiring, the proposals to establish a Code of Conduct and Ethics (submitted by task force chair Longley) and to adopt a Conflict-of-Interest Policy (proposed by Keys) were also tabled, with instructions to further clarify the wording in these documents and the relationship between them. Hoganson pointed out that there was information in the board packet about a proposal from Columbia International Affairs Online (CIAO) for a partnership with SHAFR and that she would proceed by appointing a task force to evaluate this proposal. There was also brief discussion about proposed procedures for recording Council votes and making SHAFR committee reports public. When it was evident that there was a variety of opinion on Council, action on this recommended policy was also deferred as was action on revising the qualifications for the Michael J. Hogan Foreign Language Fellowship. Vivien Chang alerted Council that she would email a written report on the activities of the Graduate Student Committee in lieu of the oral report listed on the agenda.

Council’s final action was to briefly consider a report from Matthew Connelly, SHAFR’s representative to the National Coalition on History (NCH), that expressed concern that the most recent federal budget saw a reduction in funding to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The consensus was that it was important to maintain a quality working relationship with NCH Executive Director Lee White and to explore ways in which SHAFR members interested in NARA advocacy could further support White’s work and that of the Historical Documentation Committee (chaired by Richard Immerman).

Council adjourned shortly after 12 noon with thanks being expressed to SHAFR President Kristin Hoganson and by Hoganson to Council for its work.