

**SHAFR Council Meeting
March 2, 2022 via Zoom**

Council Members Present: Laura Belmonte (presiding), Emily Conroy-Krutz, Ann Heiss, Kristin Hoganson, Daniel Immerwahr, Kyle Longely, Sarah Miller-Davenport, Andrew Preston, Lauren Turek, Vanessa Walker, Karine Walther, Molly Wood, and Kelsey Zavelo.

Attending: Amy Sayward (ex officio), Faith Bagley

Renewal of the *Passport* Editor

Laura Belmonte started the meeting and presented an oral report on the findings of the committee charged with reviewing *Passport* editor Andrew Johns for renewal. In light of his work, his self-evaluation, and the findings of the committee, the committee recommended that Johns be reappointed for another five-year term. That motion passed unanimously, 13-0-0.

General Renewal Policy

Amy Sayward reviewed the proposed draft renewal process that Council had requested at its January meeting. It was drafted to cover the executive director and editors of *Passport* and *Diplomatic History*, but it could be expanded in the future to include the conference coordinator and *Guide* editor. The initial term of service is five years, so in the fourth year, the person will undergo a review process, which includes self-reflection as well as an affirmation of institutional support, where that is relevant. Following the review, Council can choose to renew the person for an additional five years (or a shorter period) or initiate a search to fill the position. If renewed, SHAFR would undertake national search in the ninth year, but Council could offer the person in the position the opportunity to compete in the national search. This policy would be incorporated into all future contracts/MOUs for these positions, or they could be added to the by-laws.

Shaun Armstead had suggested that the review might be more useful in the third year, rather than the fourth, to allow room for correction. Belmonte stated that regular communication and biannual reports are made by each of these positions, so it might not be necessary but could be helpful. Daniel Immerwahr made a motion to move the initial review to the third year; Karine Walther seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 13-0-0.

Walther then made a motion to approve the policy as amended; Emily Conroy-Krutz seconded, and all present voted in favor (13-0-0).

Sayward spoke to the differences between putting this policy into the by-laws (which would require a vote of the membership this fall) versus just having it as an internal policy (which would be easier to amend as needed). Some Council members argued that adding the policy to the by-laws would make the process of filling and renewing those positions more transparent to the membership. Others argued that both goals could be accomplished by publishing this policy in the minutes and in *Passport*, without having to amend the by-laws. In a poll of Council members, a majority favored publication of the policy without amending the by-laws (9-4-0).

Sanctions and Appeals Committee

Sayward guided Council through the key points of the draft of the Sanctions and Appeals Committee operating procedures, which were drafted in response to questions proposed by the Code of Conduct Review Team (CCRT). The June 2021 Council meeting had established the committee will consist of five members, and the draft policy recommended that it respond only after the CCRT and External Investigator had reviewed accusations and levied initial sanctions (such as removal from the conference), which would occur immediately. The Sanctions and Appeals Committee would meet subsequently to decide on any additional sanctions; its minutes would remain confidential and become part of the official paper file in the Executive Director's possession, which would not be archived. The Executive Director would also be responsible for communicating the committee's decisions and for collecting/communicating any no-contact orders ahead of SHAFR events.

For the appeals section of the policy, the draft policy took the stance that if an offense had been serious enough to warrant a decision for expulsion from the organization by the Sanctions and Appeals Committee, such a decision would likely not be revisited unless exculpatory information had come to light. In other cases, the person could appeal after two years by presenting either exculpatory evidence or that steps they had taken to make amends. The Sanctions and Appeals Committee could also get a statement from the target of the behavior, which would be solicited through the Executive Director, who would also supply the committee with the original documentation. The Sanctions and Appeals Committee will decide whether to hear the appeal and whether to uphold, remove, or reduce sanctions.

A clarifying question was about a target of harassment who chose to remain anonymous at the time of the complaint. Sayward clarified that there could be no follow-up in such a case, and in any other case, the target would decide whether or not they wanted to be involved in the appeal process. There was discussion about whether the Sanctions and Appeals Committee would still meet if the external investigator did not recommend sanctions, and there was consensus that the committee would not meet if neither the external investigator nor the Code of Conduct Response Team (CCRT) recommended sanctions.

There was also discussion on whether the Sanctions and Appeals Committee would meet during the conference. Some suggested that the external investigator—responding to a CCRT report—should make a recommendation to the Sanctions and Appeals Committee, which would make the ultimate decision about in-conference sanctions (such as issuing a warning or expelling a person from the conference). However, others suggested that the external investigator should make that decision in order to ensure that there would be no appearance of a conflict of interest. In this case, the SHAFR President would notify the offender of the external investigator's sanction and would work with the Executive Director to execute that sanction. The Sanctions and Appeals Committee would, in this scenario, only meet after the conference and decide on any subsequent sanctions in the event that the CCRT and/or external investigator recommended further sanctions beyond the scope of the conference. Council also pointed out that this policy would not only apply to the conference but to all other SHAFR-organized events, therefore the wording in the draft policy should recognize that.

There was also discussion of how conflicts of interest would play out in terms of the membership of the Sanctions and Appeals Committee and what language to add to the draft policy to reflect this issue. In the case of a committee chair identifying a conflict of interest, there was consensus that the SHAFR President would ask another member of that same committee to fill in. In the case of a conflict of

interest by the President and/or President-Elect, there was agreement that a former president could be asked to step in. In defining what type(s) of relationship would/should trigger a recusal, there was discussion of how close of a relationship might prevent someone from making an objective finding. Council requested that the Executive Director review and utilize the existing conflict-of-interest policy in a subsequent draft of this policy. The question of conflict of interest also came up in terms of whether there would or would not be an inherent conflict of interest if a member of the Sanctions and Appeals Committee who had been involved in an initial verdict was on the committee when it heard an appeal of that same verdict.

Council instructed the Executive Director to distill this feedback into a revised policy for further Council review and vote in a timeframe that would allow it to be in place ahead of the June conference. Additionally, the Executive Director was instructed to contact the external investigator ahead of each year's conference (rather than the head of the CCRT).

Decision on the Future of *The SHAFR Guide*

Building on its January discussion, the Executive Director had provided documentation and three basic decisions that Council could make about the future of *The SHAFR Guide*: to negotiate a new contract with Brill to publish the *Guide*, to discontinue publication of the *Guide*, or to move the *Guide* in-house as a member benefit. Council believed that the usage statistics by SHAFR members demonstrated that the *Guide* was useful to people, and Sayward affirmed that Alan McPherson was willing to continue as the editor of the *Guide*. There being no financial advantage to moving the *Guide* in-house, which was also a problematic proposition given the current flux in the state of the website, Andrew Preston moved that SHAFR continue publishing the *Guide* with Brill; Lauren Turek seconded the motion, which passed unanimously (13-0-0).

Webpage Update

Sayward reported to Council on the new process for updating the shafr.org website, which will be spearheaded by the Electronic Communications Editor (Brian Etheridge) and his advisory committee, who, instead of issuing a general Call for Proposals (CFP), are identifying websites of historical organizations that are particularly strong and then interviewing their designers in a process more akin to the process by which the Program Committee and President chose the on-line platform for the 2021 SHAFR Conference. The Electronic Communication Advisory Committee hopes to have a recommendation for Council by its June meeting.

Request for Funds from Electronic Communications Advisory Committee

A further item of business from the Electronic Communications Advisory Committee was a budget request for materials and services needed to interview SHAFR members at the June conference on the Tulane campus that would then be developed into three podcasts. There was general discussion by Council about whether these would be on-going expenditures. Some suggested that if podcasts become a regular element of SHAFR electronic communications that we might seek to do the editing in-house. Belmonte suggested that this was best considered as a pilot project to support our newly hired Electronic Communications Editor who would not otherwise be able to request funds ahead of the conference. Immerwahr made a motion to approve the \$2000 budget; Walther seconded, and the motion passed unanimously 13-0-0. However, Council requested by September 1st a document from the

Electronic Communications Editor that would lay out a strategic vision and budget for electronic communications for Council consideration.

SHAFR Advocacy

Sayward brought Council's attention to the American Historical Association's statement (issued the previous day) condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine ([https://www.historians.org/news-and-advocacy/aha-advocacy/aha-statement-condemning-russian-invasion-of-ukraine-\(february-2022\)](https://www.historians.org/news-and-advocacy/aha-advocacy/aha-statement-condemning-russian-invasion-of-ukraine-(february-2022))). She also pointed out that response to that statement on Twitter that morning had been ambivalent, stating that although they condemned the invasion of Ukraine, they were concerned that similar statements had not been issued for areas of conflict where the people were not white. Discussion in Council reflected similar discomfort. There were questions about whether SHAFR should simply have a policy of not signing on to such statements, focusing instead on areas of declassification and records preservation (such as the recent advocacy vote to sign on to the AHA letter about the Presidential Records Act). Others wondered whether SHAFR might, instead, expand its advocacy to deal with issues such as the ways in which academics were being censored for statements about the on-going conflict between Israel and Palestine. Vanessa Walker pointed out that human rights activists have traditionally engaged in such deliberations about what is effective and necessary. Belmonte suggested that a robust discussion of SHAFR's role in public advocacy was needed and could perhaps be held at the June Council meeting.

Sayward also asked for Council guidance on the best method of requesting advocacy votes. She explained that technical glitches on advocacy votes in the MailChimp framework previously had led her to shift the last advocacy vote (on the preferred attributes of the future Archivist of the United States) into the MemberClicks framework. However, this latter advocacy vote had failed to reach the required 30% of members voting, which might have been attributable to members having to sign in to MemberClicks before they could vote. Hoganson stated that she favored the lowest possible barrier to voting, and this seemed to be the consensus of Council.

Walker moved to send the advocacy vote on Ukraine to the membership; Molly Wood seconded the motion, which passed 10-2, which was a sufficient threshold of approval (80% voting and 2/3 voting in favor per the by-laws). As a result, the issue will be sent to the membership for a final decision.

Before the meeting adjourned, Sayward asked for Council members' availability, and there was consensus for June 8th.