

SHAFR Council meeting
Friday, September 9 via Zoom

Present: Laura Belmonte (chair), Shaun Armstead, Emily Conroy-Krutz, Ann Heiss, Kristin Hoganson, Daniel Immerwahr, Kyle Longley, Sarah Miller-Davenport, Lauren Turek, Vanessa Walker, Molly Wood, and Kelsey Zavelo.

Attending: Amy Sayward (ex officio), Faith Bagley, and Kaete O’Connell.

Introductory matters:

Laura Belmonte opened the meeting, asking if there was any input on the June Council minutes and the language about the advocacy process, which were both approved by email since the last meeting. There was no further discussion.

Discussion of virtual conference components:

Belmonte then opened the floor for comments and discussion around the survey of the membership regarding the conference. She stated that the survey did not show a general consensus or way forward for the organization. Ann Heiss then expressed that the Program Committee for the 2023 conference has a preference for no virtual conference component next year in the coming year, especially given the relatively high expense and the very low attendance at these sessions in 2022, despite the high quality of those virtual sessions.

Discussion quickly shifted to ideas about potential virtual events throughout the year—not directly connected to the conference—which was an idea brought up by several members in the survey. Suggestions included tying content to the quarterly appearance of *Diplomatic History*, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Historical Association, hosting chapter workshops with graduate students and mentors, co-hosting programs with organizations such as CENFAD, and commentaries on contemporary foreign affairs issues. An example that SHAFR might adapt is the current UK-Ireland SHAFR workshop sessions headed by Elisabeth Leake. The survey of SHAFR graduate students showed a desire to be more involved throughout the year, so this is a welcome development.

Council members then discussed how best to move these ideas into implementation. The suggestion of having the Conference and Membership committees work together on this was quickly replaced with the idea that this year’s Program Committee (and potentially future program committees) might consider the proposals (and other ideas from the Program Committee) to implement year-long programming. Heiss said that she would reach out to the Program Committee with the expectation that they would welcome this opportunity.

Reports on 2022 SHAFR conference:

Amy Sayward recapped her report on the Summer Institute—“Women in the World”—that was held in conjunction with the 2022 conference in New Orleans. She was delighted with how it went and thought that it provided a welcome opportunity to build community at the end of the pandemic and at a time when graduate programs are smaller and therefore less able to develop community. She also

highlighted that additional returns will be forthcoming from the institute, including a panel proposal for the upcoming conference.

Sayward also reported that there were no code-of-conduct reports coming from the conference or institute, which was good news. She and Emily Conroy-Krutz, of the Code of Conduct Response Team, expressed the opinion that having our new external investigator serve as the initial intake person was a welcome change in our procedure.

SHAFR Conference Coordinator Kaete O'Connell joined the meeting. In response to a question about the pros and cons of campus dormitory housing, she responded that there was some discontent about the dorm housing and about the distance between the conference hotel and the campus. She also observed that this conference had about one-third the number of graduate students that SHAFR's pre-COVID conferences had enjoyed. Discussion led to a consensus that attendees choosing dorm housing need reminders about the need for shampoo, soap, and other basic amenities and that privacy issues in such housing probably need to be considered in making initial arrangements. However, it was clear that some international attendees and others very much appreciated the low-cost housing option.

Discussion of upcoming SHAFR conferences:

O'Connell talked about the emerging plans for a three-hour dinner river cruise on the Potomac River as the social event for the upcoming 2023 conference in Arlington, Virginia. That event will be limited to 150 tickets, and those tickets may be a little higher than usual to fit within Council limits on the subsidy for social events.

In discussing plans for the 2024 Toronto conference, O'Connell mentioned that she was currently seeking a contract bid from a hotel that is within walking distance of the University of Toronto campus. Additionally, dormitory housing will be available at \$50 Canadian. She will be visiting the campus this fall with the hopes of finalizing campus and housing arrangements as well as investigating a possible social event at Fort York. O'Connell then left the meeting.

Sayward then asked Council if it wished to issue a request for proposals (RFP) for the 2026, non-DC conference. She explained that interest had already been expressed by the Reagan Library and by Texas A&M. There being general consensus about issuing the RFP, Sayward stated that she would draft that document, with proposals then being assessed by the Conference Committee.

Archival issues:

Council discussed the report from Amy Offner, as our representative to the National Coalition on History, noting increased activism of late on issues related to the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Council did accept Offner's suggestion that SHAFR explore how the National Humanities Alliance might also assist SHAFR in advocating for issues of importance to it. There was also discussion in Council—based on a report from Historical Documentation Committee chair Sarah Snyder—about SHAFR's growing role in regularly discussing issues of declassification with archives, including both NARA and the Reagan Library most recently. Sayward added that Thomas Zeiler and Katherine Sibley—both former members of the State Department's Historical Advisory Committee—had recently accepted appointments to the committee.

Electronic communications:

Council considered the report of the Electronic Communications Editor, Brian Etheridge. Council assented to the suggestion that Kelly McFarland serve as a co-editor, with a requisite addition to the advisory committee to replace McFarland. Daniel Immerwahr asked when the podcasts recorded at the June conference would be available to the membership, and Council requested a more detailed budget for this area moving forward. There was also a suggestion that the Electronic Communications co-editors might play an important role in assisting with the year-long virtual programming of SHAFR.

Sayward, who had submitted an Executive Director's report, highlighted the oral history project that she has initiated, with a first interview with George Herring, a former SHAFR president and editor of *Diplomatic History*. Her hope is to collect additional information about SHAFR's history and hopefully to further intergenerational discussion about the field. She stated that she had discussed the idea with Heiss of conducting oral histories at the 2023 conference in the room where Council meetings are traditionally held.

New business:

Sayward pointed out that the National Coalition of History had (on Wednesday afternoon) requested questions that might be posed to the nominee for Archivist of the United States. She requested any possible questions be submitted by Monday.

Molly Wood mentioned that she (as the teaching-centered representative on Council) would be co-chairing the Teaching Committee with Justin Hart (recently appointed). They are in the process of considering a diverse set of committee members who might also be appointed to open positions on the committee. She welcomed any suggestions on potential members.

Belmonte adjourned the meeting at 2:00 pm U.S. Eastern time.