



## Overview of Committee Reports

February 2019

### STANDING COMMITTEES

**Audit Committee** *Chair: David Simmons, Billings Farm.* The committee met on January 15 with our auditor, Jeff Betzler of Edmondson, Betzler, and Dame, PLLC, and approved the audit.

**Editorial Advisory Board** *Chair: Rebecca Shrum, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.* With the assistance of the editorial board and series editor Rebecca K. Shrum, AASLH continues to work towards improving the book series. Beginning in summer 2018, the series adopted a more rigorous editorial review process, which has allowed us to gather additional feedback and opportunities to improve all manuscripts and proposals submitted for consideration for publication. The editorial board has begun more carefully considering what kinds of books, topics, and formats are most useful to practitioners and students of public history.

**Elections Committee** *Chair: Noelle Trent, National Civil Rights Museum.* For the past several years, since we began using the online services of Association Voting ([www.associationvoting.com](http://www.associationvoting.com)), the Election Committee has consisted of a chair, who reviews the election results and reports them at the Annual Business Meeting.

**Finance Committee** *Chair: Brent Ott, The Henry Ford.* The committee has met once each quarter since the last Council meeting: on December 5, 2018, and on February 6, 2019. The minutes of its meetings and the financial reports it reviews are reviewed by Council.

**Governance Committee** *Chair: Kim Fortney, National History Day.* Committee members conducted exit interviews with the four members of Council and two officers whose terms ended at the Annual Meeting in Kansas City. In addition, the committee finalized and got Council to approve the new Governance Handbook for Council Members and assisted with the Council orientation process. The chair of the committee also conducted a survey of Council members' attributes, which the Leadership Nominating Committee then used this winter. This spring the committee chair will conduct an evaluation survey for all members of Council.

The Governance Committee has a subcommittee, the **Governing Documents Task Force**, chaired by Kim Fortney. Three members of the task force are longtime AASLH members not currently serving on any other committees or task forces. The group is updating the AASLH's articles of incorporation and the AASLH Constitution and Bylaws to be consistent with the District of Columbia Nonprofit Code and with the ways in which AASLH has evolved in recent years.

**Investment Committee** *Chair: Ann Toplovich, Tennessee Historical Society.* The committee has met once each quarter since the last Council meeting: on November 28, 2018, and February 1, 2019. The minutes of its meetings and the investment reports it reviews are reviewed by Council.

**Leadership Nominating Committee** *Chair: Laura Hartz Stanton, Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts.* The committee is meeting by telephone and discussing in email a pool of potential nominees, with special attention to making the leadership of AASLH more reflective of the great diversity in the field. In addition to greater inclusiveness with regard to racial/diversity, the LNC is focusing on the participation of smaller organizations as well as individuals from the Great Plains and West.

**National Awards Committee** *Chair: Nicholas Hoffman, Missouri Historical Society.* The committee implemented all the changes approved by Council. The online submission system through Submittable was streamlined and changed to ask nominators to address their project's impact and how it supports our current definition of "good history." The committee's goals for 2019 include surpassing 100 awards nominations, filling the remaining state representative vacancies, considering how award categories can better reflect progressive and innovative work being done in history, revisiting the definition of "good history," and considering changes (if needed) to the awards banquet.

**Professional Standards and Ethics Committee** *Chair: Sally Yerkovich, Seton Hall University.* This past year the committee revised the AASLH Standards and Ethics document, organized a session at the 2018 Annual Meeting about deaccessioning, and represented AASLH to the Financial Standards Accounting Board (FASB) in their re-consideration of the definition of collections and the acceptable uses of funds realized from the sale of deaccessioned objects. The committee will revisit the AASLH white paper of the capitalization of collections once the FASB decisions are made final (in the first quarter of the year) and will be organizing another ethics and collections-related session for the 2019 Annual Meeting.

## OTHER COMMITTEES and TASK FORCES

**Annual Meeting Program Committee** *Chair: Jackie Barton (formerly of Ohio History Connection).* The 2019 Program Committee met in Philadelphia on January 26 to select the program. Forty-five individuals gathered for a full day of review of 164 proposed sessions. Our partnership with the International Coalition for Sites of Conscience brought a lot of new speakers and engaging topics to the conference. This year, approximately 70% of the program committee had never served on an AASLH program committee which brought a lot of new perspectives and ideas to the table. The conference program is currently being scheduled. The full program guide will be released mid-May.

**Annual Meeting Host Committee** *Co-Chairs: David Young, Delaware Historical Society, and Bill Adair, Pew Center for Heritage & Culture.* The 2019 host committee is hard at work planning tours and evening events that coordinate with the theme "What Are We Waiting For?". Evening events will focus on the rich LGBTQ community in Philadelphia and Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site. Tours also embrace the theme by focusing on issues such as public health. The committee's focus over the next few months will be fundraising for diversity scholarships, sponsorships, volunteers, and assisting AASLH with marketing efforts for the conference.

**Climate and Sustainability Task Force** *Chair: Sarah Sutton, Independent Consultant.* The task force has thoughtfully removed "Environment" from the group's title since that distinction creates an "othering" of an integral component of sustainability. Equity, economics, education and environment are equally necessary for a flourishing society. Over the next three months the task force will complete its report focusing on an overview of sustainability thinking as applied to AASLH and heritage organizations, a framework for approaching sustainability, and a recommended series of tasks, responsibilities and timelines for AASLH and this group on behalf of the field. The task force applauds AASLH's decision to sign on to "We Are Still In" initiative, and will incorporate AASLH's initial We Are Still In commitments in

our report: 1) Becoming an Environmentally Responsible Cultural Institution; 2) Reducing Materials Consumption and Waste; 3) Community Education and Communication; and 4) Reducing Climate Impacts of Packaging and Reducing Waste. The task force has prioritized two recommendations in anticipation of the report: 1) Sustainability should be completely integrated and coincidental with strategic planning institution-wide, and has particularly synergy with Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access work, and 2) Council should plan to dedicate significant funding and resources to sustainability in the future, including creating a sustainability staff lead in addition to creating a standing volunteer Committee on Sustainability.

**Collections Management Systems Task Force** *Chair: Julie Kemper, Kentucky Historical Society.* The technical leaflet is in final draft form as is the accompanying CMS company list. These will be submitted to AASLH before the end of February. A blog released fall 2018 and an informal discussion at the 2018 Annual Meeting were very helpful in connecting to more individuals and organizations interested in the topic and task force efforts. The task force would like to thank the Canadian Heritage Information Network, which has been a key partner in the project. A final discussion by the members of the task force will work to create recommendations regarding formal and informal relationships between AASLH and companies providing CMS services.

**Creative and Experimental Task Force** *Chair: Trina Nelson Thomas, Stark Museum of Art.* In August 2018 Sarah Pharaon transitioned the chair position to Trina Nelson Thomas. The task force has focused on encouraging creative session proposals for 2019 and beyond, and developing creative expression opportunities for the 2019 meeting. Some goals for 2019 and beyond include participating in one minute promotion videos “why I’m going to Philly and you should to,” developing a “secret shopper” program that is a membership benefit, reviewing the C & E Task Force Big Ideas document to consider creative and experimental ways to support peer committees and task forces.

**Diversity and Inclusion Task Force** *Chair: Marian Carpenter, John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art.* At the 2018 Annual Meeting, the task force became an official committee and is currently developing new core positions as well as revising the committee’s charter. It has increased its membership to 10 and currently has 3 active council members. The committee submitted a session proposal for the 2019 Annual Meeting and is planning another D/I mixer and community activity. The committee is also active on the Philly Conference Program Committee. To ensure AASLH accomplishes its mission to become more diverse and inclusive, the committee wants to be involved in the drafting of the organization’s new strategic plan. The committee identified Inclusive Leadership Training that will be administered at the February Council meeting by the Winters Group’s Learning and Innovation Team. The committee’s future focus is to continue advancing AASLH to full integration of Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion (DEAI) by facilitating training and educational workshops for Council, staff and membership and building partnerships/relationships with similar organizations like AAM, NCPH, AAAM and OAH.

#### **History Leadership Institute Advisory Board (NEW)**

This group consists of the major funders of HLI, the Indiana Historical Society, Conner Prairie, History Nebraska, the National Association for Interpretation, and the Missouri Historical Society. It selects the applicants, reviews the curriculum and the work of the HLI Director, Max van Balgooy, and recommends improvements to the program.

#### **SHA/HLI Alumni Committee (No chairs currently.)**

The committee helps represent the viewpoints of those who have participated in HLI or its predecessor, the Seminar for Historical Administration, with regard to where HLI is going. Committee members also solicit contributions to fund the Denny O’Toole and diversity scholarships for HLI.

**Inclusive Historians Handbook Editorial Board** *Will Walker, Cooperstown; Modupe Labode, IUPUI; and Bob Weible, NY State Historian emeritus.* The board has been working with authors on the first round of entries for the handbook, and with AASLH staff on creating the WordPress platform for the publication, which should be ready in time for the 2019 Annual Meeting.

**Task Force on the 250<sup>th</sup>** *Chair: Sara Cureton, New Jersey Historical Commission.* The U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission (USSC) is still in the beginning stages of organizing and becoming operational. A non-profit foundation has been created to deal directly with fundraising for the anniversary and the Commission is planning its second meeting in March in Washington, D.C. The task force will continue to work with the American Battlefield Trust (USSC administrative secretariat), the USSC, and other key partners to represent the expertise and interests of AASLH constituents and members, and provide insights and assistance where needed and appropriate. The task force offered sessions at several professional conferences in 2018 to encourage broader and more diverse participation in the planning for the Semiquincentennial and this effort will continue in 2019. Discussions at the SHAM meeting in December revealed enthusiastic interest in facilitating regional Semiquincentennial partnerships in various parts of the country and will be explored further. The task force will be forming subcommittees for the five goals already identified for the anniversary. An update for the field will be prepared for the 2019 Annual Meeting and will serve as a more formal kick-off for AASLH Semiquincentennial planning and activities.

## AFFINITY GROUP COMMITTEES

**Business History** *Chair: Patrick Wittwer, Wells Fargo History Museum.* The committee is planning its tour and luncheon for the Annual Meeting in Philadelphia.

**Law and Civics** *Chair: Rachael L. Drenovsky, Michigan Supreme Court.* To make themselves more accessible to larger audience, be more relevant, and to align with other AASLH efforts, the group changed their name from the Legal History Affinity Committee to the Law and Civics Affinity Committee. (Formerly, they were the Legal and Court History Affinity Group.) They will be organizing a naturalization ceremony at a local courthouse in Philadelphia during the Annual Meeting and will be doing a session on how history organizations can use events such as naturalization ceremonies to be more involved in their own communities.

**Educators and Interpreters** *Chair: Megan Wood, Ohio History Connection.* The committee is making plans for the 2019 Annual Meeting including a luncheon with speaker and a session. The committee is in the process of formalizing the committee structure and making plans and goals to align the committee's work to the overall AASLH strategic plan. The committee's focus has been communicating information via the blog and producing events for the annual meeting. The committee is also identifying 1-3 additional strategies for engaging educators and interpreters throughout the year and formalizing methods for people to volunteer and be involved in committee activities.

**Emerging History Professionals** *Chair: Lauren O'Brien, PhD Student, Rutgers University-Newark.* The committee is currently undergoing a transitional phase and is implementing exciting new changes. The committee has established new positions, developed a recruitment strategy, and recently drafted an application to appoint new committee members. The committee has three major goals for 2019: Increase EHP attendance at the Annual Meeting, host public and digital forums for productive

discussion of contemporary topics in the field, and curating an inclusive space for equitable resource and community building.

**Field Services Alliance** *Chair: Samantha Forsko, Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts.*

The committee is creating a two-part survey to be used to gauge the effectiveness of programming at the individual Field Services Offices. Part 1 aims to gather more information about individual offices. In part 2, each office will distribute a survey to their clients, seeing which services they have used in the past year, what our clients look like collectively, and how useful they find our services. The committee plans to gather data in spring 2019, re-evaluate the survey at Spring Training, with a large scale launch at the 2019 AASLH Annual Meeting.

**Historic House Museums** *Chair: Joshua Torrance, Woodlawn Museum.* The committee has planned Historic House Calls on interpretation and building educational programs. Plans for the third and fourth quarter calls are in process and ideas are welcome. Plans for the annual meeting include the HHC affinity breakfast with Donna Harris as speaker and facilitated discussions with attendees. The committee's major goal is launching a HHC Facebook page through the auspices of AASLH. The committee has plans for a formal report at a future date addressing the needs and trends of the historic house community.

**Military History** *Chair: Marc Blackburn, National Park Service.* The committee is working to recruit new members and transition them onto the committee. AASLH's Military Collections Camp workshop will be offered again in July 2019. The committee will be hosting a breakfast, History Happy Hour, as well as a concurrent session at the 2019 Annual Meeting. Throughout the year the group will continue to find ways to raise the membership's awareness of the value and relevance in military history.

**Nomenclature** *Chair: Paul Bourcier, Museum of Science & History.* The committee, in partnership with the Canadian Heritage Information Network, recently launched an online version of *Nomenclature 4.0*, integrating and reconciling the latest edition of Robert Chenhall's cataloging standard with data from the Parks Canada Visual and Descriptive Dictionary. This effort allows users free access and expanded information. The effort also allows the committee to make more timely updates to better respond to the needs of the profession across North America. In the coming months, the task force will prepare to make *Nomenclature* fully downloadable through Linked Open Data.

**Religious History** *Chair: Barbara Franco, Independent Scholar.* The community is working on ways to diversify membership and participation to broaden the definition of religious history and the places where it is interpreted. The publication of *Interpreting Religion at Museums and Historic Sites* is a step toward engaging a broader audience in conversations about the impact of religion as an important theme in American history. The committee submitted a session proposal for the 2019 Annual Meeting on "Preserving Religious History in Changing Communities." The committee is also working on a lunch program that focuses on Philadelphia and the history of religious toleration as well as tours that help access the diverse religious history of the Philadelphia region. The committee reviewed and provided suggestions for a History News article, "Encountering Civil Religion at Public History Sites," by Stephanie Fulbright. Chair Barbara Franco will participate in a panel on "Faith in Public:" Religion at American History Museums and Historic Sites, April 4th at the OAH meeting in Philadelphia. The committee is considering convening a forum or creating a Technical Leaflet or Webinar on Interpreting Religion. The committee is committed to exploring the full diversity of

religious experiences and encouraging opportunities for history organizations to enhance religious tolerance through historical understanding.

**Small Museums** *Chair: Jacqui Ainlay-Conley, Nederland Mining Museum.* In 2018, the committee raised funds and awarded five full and five partial scholarships for the annual meeting. In addition, the Kansas City host committee had funds left in their scholarship and was able to award four full scholarships to attendees in the small museum applicant pool who were from states specified in their scholarship criteria. Committee members hosted two Conversations and several sessions, and arranged the program for the Small Museum luncheon, which had 95 attendees. Members and scholarship recipients continue to submit blogs.

**Women's History** *Co-Chairs: Megan Byrnes, and Jennifer Krafchik, Wendy Jessup and Associates.* The committee is finalizing the WHAG Value Statement for the Centennial of the Ratification of the 19th Amendment and expects to release the final statement in March. The committee is planning activities for the 2019 AASLH Annual Meeting, including the submission of an offsite tour with the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and a conference session called "On the Front Lines of Costumed Interpretation: The Challenges of Bringing Women's Stories to Life at Historic Sites." In coordination with AASLH staff, the committee is exploring the possibility of creating a WHAG Facebook page, which would serve as a pilot for other Affinity Groups interested in expanding their outreach through other social media platforms.